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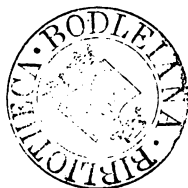


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"Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
That would not let me sleep: methought, I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And praised be rashness for it,—Let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us,  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hewn them how we will."

*Hamlet.*



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1858.



# REST AT EVENTIDE.

## CHAPTER I.

A man stood on a barren mountain peak  
In the night, and cried : " Oh, world of heavy gloom !  
Oh, sunless world ! Oh, universal tomb !  
Blind, cold, mechanic sphere—wherein I seek  
In vain for life and love, till hope grows weak  
And falters towards chaos ! Vast, blank doom !  
Huge darkness in a narrow prison-room !  
Thou art dead—dead ! " Yet, ere he ceased to speak,  
Across the level ocean in the east  
The moon-dawn grew ; and all that mountain's side  
Rose, newly born from empty dusk. Fields, trees,  
And deep glen-hollows, as the light increased,  
Seemed vital ; and from heaven bare and wide  
The moon's white ~~sun~~ looked over lands and seas.

THE spring flowers had just begun to bloom when my father brought home his new bride. I heard the whirl of their carriage-wheels, as they rapidly rolled up the drive. We sat alone, myself and my lover—prepared, we believed, to receive them. I walked out into the hall ; the door stood wide open ; the servants were hurrying there ; and in a moment I saw my father enter, with my stepmother leaning on his arm. She was very sweet-tempered and kindly-looking, tall and ladylike, weary with long travelling, and, it seemed to me, a little anxious for her home-coming to be over. I moved forward quickly, and was clasped in my father's arms ; and after that embrace, he presented me with much affection to his wife. We shook hands, and she offered to kiss me ; therefore we kissed each other ; and my involuntary agitation had subsided, so I briefly introduced Mr. Raymond. The servants were greeted, and we passed on to the drawing-room. A large fire was blazing upon the

hearth, and refreshments were waiting upon the table, and a genial warmth hung over all the things—though I never could imagine on retrospection how that could be. But Mrs. Cameron was a very sweet woman, there was no question of that; and though I never saw much of her, I believe she was a universal favourite, having the charm of setting other people naturally at their ease, and making ordinary elements instrumental to general comfort. I accompanied Mrs. Cameron up to her chamber (where again there was light and fire), and I assisted her to disrobe, and we chatted lightly while her ringlets were arranged—very soft and bright they were, and she was quite *comme il faut*; and then we descended again to those who were awaiting us.

I was stalking on before, for I was unaccustomed to lady companions, and it was peculiar to feel an arm linked within mine; but she did it; so we went down in that loving manner. Edward Raymond was standing by the side of papa on the far side of the room as we entered; and he was listening attentively, while papa was speaking quickly and earnestly. The contrast between them was somewhat striking. Papa was at that time middle-aged, with an exceedingly benignant countenance; rather above the middle height, and having an air of decision, although in reality there never was a man so easily influenced by those who were dear to him. Edward Raymond—my Edward—was shorter than papa, and at that time very slight. His blue eyes were like the eyes of angels—they carried so little effect of humanity in them. He had a high forehead, over which his brown hair waved and curvetted, and his lips were most classically formed. The contour of the face was lovely,—too beautiful for a man, while the whiteness and transparency of his hands gave the beholder an indescribable sadness, you felt that they could not be compatible with health. Then as we entered, as I said, he was silent, and he always looked best, to my sight, when still. I was never more struck with his appearance than at this moment, especially as my mother-in-law, still leaning upon my arm, whispered audibly in my ears, "You are very fortunate, my dear!" But I was annoyed with her for making that expression. How dared she congratulate me, whom she had not known an hour—and on the possession of a private property which she had barely seen? I vouchsafed



no maiden blush—I swept over the floor, and took my seat (in anticipation that the lady-mistress felt fatigued), for the last time, at the head of my father's table. My lover sat by me, and they two, the newly-married, on the other side. I felt my constitutional spasm breaking over the region where my heart was supposed to be ; it was so often there, and so continually affected my conduct, that nobody remarked it ; least of all did Edward. I may explain, that it was not a bodily ailment, but merely the consequence of any jar that chanced to alight upon my temperament. But where happiness is—and the greater proportion is made up of hopeful auspices, the weaker and discordant part generally yields. So my transitory anger faded. They talked about their journey ; they said they were delighted to be home : and I and Edward, we talked just a little, he so kind and gentle towards me the while ; and at a late hour, I started at the conviction that this evening, expected to be almost insufferable, had been absolutely pleasant. I passed out into the library, to receive the good-night of my lover, and hurriedly to discuss the items of the evening. The stars were serene as on the eve they were created ; the moon glanced down with a pitying ray. It always makes me cold to see such night-times. I shivered, I remember, and my lover drew me from the window, out of the reach of *that* cold, and talked to me of the dawning future, when we were to be so happy. And they were contagious—such innocent hopes and divine aspirations ! I think that I feel at this moment the aguish home-sickness with which I rested my head on his shoulder and shed a few briny tears. The disinherited mistress of the home of an own dear mother, to the gentle guide whose holy heart had proudly opened to take her in.

## CHAPTER II.

## ECHOES.

Still the angel stars are shining,  
Still the rippling waters flow,  
But the angel voice is silent  
That I heard here long ago.  
Hark ! the echoes murmur low—  
“Long ago !”

I WAS an only child. My father was a simple country gentleman. My mother was higher in position than he—a beauty, and should have been an heiress ; but by giving her hand to the man of her choice, she forfeited her place in the eccentric good-will of the ancient female relation who possessed the fortune ; who, enraged by the abnegation of higher rank and greater possessions which my mother made by her womanly choice, and having no sympathy with those finer affections by which her young niece was influenced (for she herself never married, preferring to be her own arbitress)—this lady, on the eve of my parents' bridal, disinherited the girl who between love and ambition had chosen with unworldliness. She placed in the trembling hand of the gentle bride, on the threshold of her new and mysterious happiness, a draft upon Coutts for the sum of £5,000, saying, as she did so, these pitiless words : “There, child ! you have made your own bed, and as such you must lie upon it ; never expect anything more from me.” And nothing more did she ever receive—not even an invitation to the house ; and my father was proud, if he was not rich, and he would not permit his wife to pay her relation courtesies which were not encouraged. So there was never any communication henceforth between the houses ; and in the year in which I was born, the old lady died, leaving the whole of her property to a distant and obscure connection. But my mother *was not the less happy that she fell from the inheritance which had been destined for her from childhood. If my father was not wealthy, he was not poor. Their home was not*

baronial castle, but a handsome and comfortable residence, and their society was composed of the best of the county families. There was ever hospitality at Lynwood Hall, where the master was honourable and hearty, and the lady gifted and fair. It was a very sweet place, that country village, with trees stretching wide at the back of the house, and a gurgling river on the nether side ; and cottages, the prettiest that ever were seen—with their gardens before them, and white stone steps, irregular, up to the porch—scattered upon the right. Then the old grey tower of the village church peeped through in the distance, beyond where the elm and the beech trees sent their spreading branches over the smiling green. And this was the home I was born to—this was my inheritance. My parents had been married three years and a half before Providence vouchsafed them a child ; therefore my birth was a most auspicious event, ushered in by rejoicings of high and low, and bringing the single crowning bliss to fill up the measure of earthly prosperity enjoyed by this favoured pair.

I have heard that no baby was ever received with such irrepressible pleasure. Scarcely a servant was permitted to touch the soft, velvety image ; but my mother carried me continually in her arms, and I always slept by her side. My father vied with maternal tenderness in natural and gratified pride, and never was only child such a treasure in olden or modern time. My earliest memories are very like fairy tales—I cannot tell if they be real. I know that surrounding objects are just—for I lived long in that home ; but the lady who moved through those pleasant rooms and among those charming flowers—if my mother were such as she seems to me now—she must indeed have been beautiful. More classic in feature than the stateliest dame who looked down from the library-wall, and over her face such a pure, high light—I can find no simile to convey it. She was tall, I know, and had a slender figure, and her hands were wonderfully fine, while her voice—and I certainly remember that, for her songs are distinct to me still—it was sweet and clear as the notes of a lark—ininitely more melodious than any music I ever heard.

*She used to wear soft, full dresses, not particularly costly, and, I think, was always pale ; and she had not used to adorn*

her hair, she had no need—itself was sufficiently becoming to her fair face. It was black and shining, and she braided it over her beautiful brows, and left it in a knot at the back.

My mother taught me my earliest lessons. She would take me in her arms and cause me to repeat simple rhymes or texts of Scripture before I was able to master the difficulties of first learning to read.

One quotation was this—it clings to my mind, though half a lifetime of the longest span has passed away since then, and I was but an infant of four years old when I imbibed it. The early seed might well have been choked by the mass of matter since crushed on the soil ; but not so, this remains :—

“I love *them*,” said my gentle mother—“I love *them*,” repeated her child—“that love me”—“that love me”—“and they that seek me early shall find me ;” and

“Little children will be there,  
Who have sought the Lord by prayer,  
In every Sabbath school.”

Explaining to my infantine understanding that the sentiment applied no less to a child in my position. And think you I ever hear those words to this distant day, those words familiar to many lisping tongues, but the thought of my mother returns to me ; and in all my wanderings, in all my struggles, in all my bitter griefs, there hath walked by my side a ministering angel whose robes did not scorn the taint of mine. No influence exerted in after-life could match the strength of those saintly remembrances ; and the hope of rejoining her beatified spirit will soothe and sustain me to the end of my life. I have many human comforters now, but my mother’s hand is eternally beckoning me out of the reach of pain and death ; and I tremble lest I hang on the hope of regaining her too ardent and swelling prayer, that so its intensity might cloud other and diviner need.

## CHAPTER III.

Who is this, with elastic bound  
For the first time treading on British ground,  
Who hath crossed the deep sea's heaving billow  
To lay his head on wisdom's pillow ?

I HAD a companion in the days of my childhood, the daughter of the clergyman who held the benefice, which was not in my father's gift. We were just the same age, and she was an only daughter, though not an only child ; but we did not resemble each other in any other respect. Her name was Lillie Barton ; she was a quiet little girl, and we were very much attached to each other.

Our parents arranged, as we became older, that one lady governess should instruct the two. Therefore Lillie came every morning to my school-room ; the distance was short from her home to mine, and we learned and played together.

In our studies we agreed remarkably well, for we both enjoyed our tasks, though each in her separate way. I devoured my lessons as I did my sweetmeats, never tasting their depths in my haste, and often forgetting their *morale* ; though, upon the whole, I must have imbibed a fair share of knowledge. But Lillie was always steady in everything that she did ; it never was a reproach against her, as it was against me, that she dashed or rushed through any portion of her avocations, and could scarcely be said to have attained the end. No ; Lillie was always calm and steadfast, even as a little child. I have seen her sit patiently committing to memory long tiresome lessons in chronology, when I knew that our governess did not demand that lesson of either of us. She merely told us it was useful, but that sufficed for Lillie. Yet Lillie loved poetry as well as I ; and not one of the learned persons who have delighted me since, have met my idea of her simple appreciation of the beautiful. We *learned largely of poetry*—it filled our leisure, for it did not *form one of our staple studies*. We hunted through books

for the finest compositions to suit our different tastes, and we stored them in our minds with marvellous rapidity, and beguiled the time till it literally fled through the varying seasons of many bright years, as, our arms wound round each other, we two happy children wandered about in that delightful country. My style was this—"the chivalric and heroic," as my Lillie would laughingly say—

"Royal in splendour went down the day,  
On the plains where an Indian city lay."

And—

"Not when his royal eagles flew  
In sun-bright splendour o'er him,  
When he saw, and came, and overthrew,  
And kings bent down before him."

And—

"On Linden when the sun was low,  
All bloodless lay th' untrodden snow."

That was my favourite style, and I used to pour it forth with a volume of enthusiasm that actually startled holy little Lillie; while such as she loved—and I loved to hear from her lips—falling like drops of a crystal stream when my mind was hot and agitated, made me tranquil at once; while she herself was dearer and dearer every day—we were truly foster-sisters. She preferred such pieces as this—

"They grew in beauty side by side."

And to this day I cannot bear the recitation of poetry she loved, by the lips of other people—it gives me too great a pang.

When Lillie and I were ten years old, we were surprised one morning by my mother's entrance into our little study, with a foreign letter open in her hand, which she offered to the inspection of our excellent governess, and sat down by me. She looked quite flushed and rather anxious, but it seemed not painfully so. I felt very inquisitive. What could that letter be—and for what purpose should mamma bring it there? She did not keep me waiting long. I saw her lip quiver a little, and she kissed me tenderly. Then *she said*, "What do you think, my daughter? You have often regretted you had no brother to play with Cranston Barton;

God has sent you a brother, my dear, and I need not tell you, you must love him." Her voice had nearly broken down in speaking the last words.

"Mamma!" I cried, starting up with a vague presentiment of I knew not what; "mamma, dearest, what is it you say?—a brother!—am I to have a brother?"

"I will explain to you, my Mary," my mother replied.

"You are aware that your papa had an only brother, who, many years ago, when he was quite a youth, left his home and the profession which was chosen for him, because his tastes lay in another direction; he could not bear any settled line of life. He wished to travel, and he possessed interest in South America, whither his wishes tended. In short, my dear, as you may have heard, your dear uncle sailed for that distant land, and he never returned. His pursuits were agreeable to the turn of his mind, and his engagements became highly lucrative. His letters were few and far between, but he did not forget his native country or his family, as the last event of his life has proved. On the contrary, he retained the most affectionate regard for his distant family, but various events caused him to postpone his return, and now it is no longer in time that we shall meet him."

I was weeping now as if my heart would break. Lillie had approached to listen, and we neither of us anticipated the *dénouement*.

"That letter, my Mary, announces to your father the lamented death of your uncle, adding the further information, of which we were not previously aware, that Mr. Reginald Cameron had married in that country, had buried his wife, and left an only child—that child, a son, who, in accordance with the will of his deceased father, is now on the voyage to Europe, to the charge of his nearest relatives."

"Oh, mamma!" I could say nothing more. I cried with passionate feeling. My beloved, my dear cousin! I should have a brother! Precipitately a whirl of thoughts rushed over me: how old would he be—would he speak our language—would he be beautiful—would he be kind—would he stay with us for ever—how should we possibly console him under such terrible afflictions? To have neither father

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nor mother ! I managed to find words, after a few minutes spent by the window struggling to make myself still—for I thought every instant my voice would burst out into a shriek, I was so intensely affected. But my mother knew no more than she had told me, and I was compelled perforce to await my stranger cousin's arrival, before I could lay hold of one legitimate crumb to feed my craving enthusiasm.

My father set out for Southampton, whither the homeward-bound should come ; for on perusing that said extraordinary letter, it was found that, by some delay in the mails, the *Aurora* might even now be in port, and so in reality she was.

And the very next day after he left us, my father wrote hurriedly, to say that my cousin had arrived, and was a bright-looking boy, but in delicate health—the effect of the voyage—and not able to speak a word of English. The carriage was to be sent to the Wiberton station, to meet the four o'clock train.

Then that very day he would come ! I was wild with excitement ; I rushed hither and thither. The servants were busied in preparing for the strangers, for we concluded some attendants would be with the foreign boy ; and my father, in his haste, had not mentioned my cousin's age, therefore upon that point we were quite ignorant.

Lillie Barton's mamma did not spare us her daughter that day ; she thought, I believe, we ought to have it to ourselves. So I had not her to torment with my vagaries and to frighten with my ecstasies ; but all time ends, and so did my suspense. The carriage arrived at last. I rushed to the door, at the imminent peril of my thin dress, which might have caught by the balusters and suspended me thence, for all I did to prevent it.

Yes, there he was ! He sprang out unaided, with a self-reliant patrician air ; my heart leapt to my lips. I darted forward, and fell into my father's arms.

He gently reproved me for my excessive feeling, and, turning to my cousin, he put our hands into each other's, saying we were to be brother and sister, which, however, my cousin did not understand—though he could not misinterpret the tone of his reception, the unbridled delight of *W* exuberant pleasure, and the tenderly-mannered greeting

with which my mother received him ; she embraced him, and kissed his cheek.

The home-like warmth was irresistible. I saw my young cousin smile. Yes, he knew we loved him ; that was enough for the present. And for himself—ah ! was not he grand, and fit to be loved ? I should think indeed he was !

I will just describe him, as he walks into the drawing-room between mamma and myself.

He looked about ten years old ; that was my own age. He was rather short, if so old ; at least I thought so. His limbs were well made and supple, though even in that momentary survey I detected a languor about his frame ; it was the effect of the long sea-voyage acting upon a temperament very vulnerable to grief. My cousin had large and splendid eyes ; they, as well as his hair, were extremely dark, and the rest of his features were regular and fine. He wore a loose dress, not an English style, but sufficiently general not to attract observation. It was dark that day, the tunic he had on, very full, with a silk cord at the waist. White trowsers, like the trowsers boys wear in England, with bright-coloured boots of some foreign skin ; a cambric collar, which was purchased in Southampton, and plaited wristlets to match, with a blue knot in front of the collar, which, I think, concludes the costume. The cap which he carried in his hand was black, with a sweeping tassel, which, when first I caught sight of him, fell over to his shoulder almost to his waist.

"And now for his name, papa, papa !" I said, as we found ourselves gathered in the drawing-room.

"And did he come alone, my love ?" my mother inquired. To which questions papa replied, "He had sailed in the care of the captain of the vessel, who had been known to his father many years ; and as he had been recently at a college in Valparaiso, between which place and his home was a matter of four hundred leagues, which distance he had accomplished backwards and forwards several past terms, it was thought no occasion existed to bring over to this country, natives, whose services here would be merely nominal, and who could only be discharged at great anxiety and cost. So Francisco de la Vega, the sole son of the Camerons, has *crossed the ocean without any attendant,*" concluded my father, *smilingly.*

"And how shall we teach him to speak?" said my mother, as our eyes followed fondly the boy's movements.

He was evidently charmed with the sight of an English garden. He viewed it with wondering delight; and the pictures and the books which were scattered about the room he handled daintily, with the touch, I thought, of an artist and a scholar. And he lingered admiringly over the Bohemian peasant-girl, which was really my favourite in that old book of plates.

But the travellers were hungry—one at least of them said so, and the other doubtless sympathized. So we took our dinner;—it was a singular time, but most delightful to me. I took my seat by Francisco's side, and proceeded to install myself into the post of care-taker of him. I consulted the tastes I conceived him most likely to have. I was careful to supply him with everything that was requisite. I invited him by signs and by involuntary exclamations to select or to decline. And he certainly succeeded in making a dinner, which was more than I required myself—my pleasure was meat and drink. Then my mother proposed I should fetch my concertina,—we were certain Francisco loved music. We sat down together at my mother's feet, and I began to play.

But with those large dark eyes fixed vaguely upon me, it was vain to try to play my airs. I was certain the spirit within him was yearning for some glorious melody. I felt how paltry my tones must sound to him. I was afraid he would never be satisfied with such things as we could offer him.

I broke off my playing; suddenly it occurred to me, did Francisco play himself?

I caught up the instrument; I placed it in his hands. He smiled and shook his head, but recollecting something, it seemed, he put down the concertina as if to go in search. He glanced round confusedly, and then smiling again, he stooped and took me by the hand. The action was unmistakable; he had need of me.

"Good, my brother!" I said; and he understood the tone of my voice at least.

We ran up the staircase, and entered his room. I watched to see its effect, for my mother had given that room to him because it was large and airy, and had a verandah

overlooking the garden, which gave it a pleasant prospect ; moreover, it was near her own.

But Francisco did not notice the chamber, he saw only his trunks ; they were worn and dingy—such as come off sea-voyages—and had the antiques locks. He produced a bunch of keys, and proceeded to fit the locks with some anxiety.

They were Chinese workmanship, and it would have puzzled a strange hand to discover their secret security ; but he opened each box readily and easily, and I then saw displayed a collection of things the most curious I thought, and all of them excessively interesting. I sat down on the carpet near where he was kneeling, and he unfolded, one by one, his treasures, reverently, and spread them for my inspection.

There were beautiful dresses of the finest silk and the brightest colouring. Crimson some were, and yellow others ; and several boasted, I firmly believe, each accepted tint of the rainbow. And there were shoes of most curious style, and the beautiful national ponchos—some made of wool, large and cumbrous, to protect, they say, from the rays of the sun—and some of silk, with rich fringes, and having embroidered upon them the Peruvian arms.

Then we came upon some fossils, once, no doubt, properly packed, but now in a state of dismemberment ; and lower down a large weird-looking parcel, which he passed more carelessly, apparently for me to unfold.

It contained the gaunt skull of an albatross, and was a treasure to my sight, for Cranston Barton was making a collection of such things, and Francisco appeared to set no store by it, so perhaps it might be presented to Cranston, the elder brother of my friend.

Then we found an old book, with string bound round and round it, which, on our opening, was discovered to contain the wings of a small flying-fish straightened between its leaves. I had never seen so rare a thing ; and that, too, pleased me especially.

Presently we arrived at the depths of that box, and Francisco produced a weapon. The case was silver, and it had a jewelled hilt engraved with arms and crest ; and, on drawing the blade, my cousin spoke. I caught the word, " Toledo :

"This, then," I said, "is a Toledo blade." We had already exchanged conversation.

He was evidently very proud of that glittering thing ; he drew it backwards and forwards on his dress, and took out his handkerchief to remove the dust long imprisonment had given it (that handkerchief was a wonderful thing, it had butterflies embroidered in the corners) ; and finally, replacing it slowly in its scabbard, he returned it, with a sigh, to the trunk.

But the thing he sought, whatever it was, had evidently not been found.

He must search another and another depository, but still certainly in vain.

The instrument of music, which it struck me he was seeking, must have been left behind. He looked very much perplexed, and very disappointed, and half rose to go away, when my eye fell upon a white covered bundle, which I felt a curiosity to examine. I laid my hand upon it. He suddenly bent down ; he gently put my hand away ; he lifted out the bundle with the nicest care, as if it contained great treasures. He held it in his arms, and motioned to me to accompany him from the room.

He remembered by which ways we had come, and walked quickly down stairs ; but when he reached the drawing-room, finding it was vacant, he was again at a loss. I divined that he missed my mother ; I flew to seek her. We came back together, and Francisco brought to her the packet he carried thus religiously, and he made her unfold it, standing by the while, with a mournful earnestness of manner.

We knew what they were, those pretty robes ; and here a casket of pearls ; and embroidered shawls, of all sizes and colours ; and, lastly, the large black mantilla. Ah, yes ! we could read their history ; we needed no aid of speech. The veins were throbbing on his forehead, and his lips were quivering, as we lingeringly regarded them ; and my mother was turning to bestow some epithet or movement of tenderness upon him, when a little case we had not previously seen slid out of the pile to the floor.

Francisco took it up, a quick gleam of pleasure lighting his face.

*It was the smallest, tiniest lute.* We sat down together,

myself and mamma, and he stood close beside us, and then he played such airs as we had never heard before, so low and sweet, they might have been wails of angelic death. On, on he played—he would never tire—always the same sad strains, thrilling and exquisite. He has told me since, he could play no other music on the lute which had been his mother's.

While he played in our presence those heavenly cadences, it was as if the two severed spirits were holding a timely companionship.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

And the soul, growing  
With God-power vernal,  
Will it not burst into  
Blossoms eternal!

FRANCISCO grew quickly quite at home with my Lillie,—far more so with her than with Cranston; and Cranston was older, and deep in his studies, so we did not have him very much with us. But we three were almost inseparable; Francisco had no scorn, like most boys of our country, of being left to companionship with girls. He delighted to draw or paint in our school-room while we were engaged; and, when our leisure came, he was always by our side. He rapidly learned our utterance; the delight of those early and broken expressions! How we laughed with joy; and he was not cross because we sported with our pupil. In six months' time my cousin Francisco was master of pretty good English; and papa and mamma held a cabinet council, to which Mr. and Mrs. Barton and my governess were admitted, to consider by what means the retarded education of Francisco should best be continued.

My mother proposed a tutor at home; she could not bear that the boy, now naturalized among us, should so soon be exposed again to strangers. And although his health was manifestly improved, she objected that the *regimen and tasks of school* would be too much for his *strength*.

Mr. Barton thought otherwise. True, his son had remained at home, and was only now off to Eton ; but circumstances, in his case, had been widely different. Cranston's education had progressed under his father's eye, not at the instance of a stranger ; and an education which, to say the least, had hitherto been desultory, should certainly, with Francisco's position, be strenuously built up. He advised my young cousin's immediate transmission to a collegiate school in the neighbourhood. My father, undecided, was disposed to yield to the arguments of the rector, when Miss Davies, a highly sensible woman who had been a long time our governess, gave it as her decided opinion that Francisco should go to the college ; and this fixed the scale.

The other ladies were compelled to lay by their fears, and the present fate of Francisco was sealed.

The hot summer holidays came to a close, with our hay-makings and picnics, and excursions down the river, and Cranston Barton departed to Eton, and Miss Davies came back to the Hall ; and our playmate, and friend, and brother,—our Francisco—he roamed about sorrowfully the last few days, received our dolorous farewells, and a great darkness all at once fell over the place—for he was gone.

I would not cry when he was gone, for that would have been folly, and very unworthy of him ; but I could not attend to my books for thinking of him, and mamma was compelled to tell me that my grief for the loss of my brother was selfish, since the parting was to be for his good.

"We would wish him a scholar, my darling child. A Cameron must be wise. We know what ability our Francisco has."

"Ah, yes!" I replied ; and I deplored no longer this necessary absence. It was not previously presented to my mind in that natural and obvious light.

"Dear, dear mamma," I exclaimed, "you know everything that is right, and so exactly what it is I require to be told. What should I do without you, mother?"

"As thy day so shall thy strength be," was the remarkable response of my mother, as she stood stroking my hair with her hand. I felt a creeping over me when I heard *these words*. I sprang up to reach her face and kiss her, and then I dashed out of the glass door into the garden,



and fell into such a fit of weeping, it seemed my heart would break.

A change had dawned over the current of my thoughts ; as I said to Lillie, I felt as if lamenting for Francisco were a dream from which a seizure of awful love towards my mother had been the awakening. After that we went on as usual, fulfilling our duties and pastimes. Our poetry was still our chief relaxation. And that autumn, the first since Francisco came, my Lillie proposed a new idea to me.

It was one Sabbath evening. We had been to church alone, and the sunset was unusually fine. We called in at a cottage as we were returning, to inquire for the bed-ridden inmate, and at her request we made a stay, and Lillie repeated some parts of the sermon we had heard, simplifying it to the old woman's mind.

The white-washed walls looked clean and inviting, and so did the blue checked bed in the corner, with the patch-work quilt which her husband's mother had given to old Bessy when she was a girl. A little round table stood in the middle of the house, on which lay her well-worn Bible. It was always wide open whenever you went in ; and the reason was this—when John had died, old Bessy's husband, he had said to her, " Bessy ! don't you never let it shut." And she said she'd be as good as his word, and so she did this—she took some parchment and pasted it along the whole breadth of the covers, so that, when it was dry, you never could shut it by possibility, for its binding was not to be bent.

Therefore, it always lay open ; but she read it too, or she had not known so many of its truths or enacted so much of its spirit. Good old woman !

There were two deal chairs in the cottage, besides the one always by Bessy's pillow. My Lillie sat by her this Sunday night ; I was farther off. It might have been eight o'clock, and the month, as I said, was October. You can imagine, by these guides, the light in that room. I am thus particular, because never before had I seen anything so remarkable about Lillie as I saw with awe that night. We had on white dresses, and our bonnets were made alike ; except that the colour near my face was maize, that suiting *my darker complexion* ; but Lillie's was blue, that *azure blue which becomes so exquisitely the transparently fair.*

Lillie's curls hung down all over her shoulders—they were long silken ringlets. I have said before how sweet she was, but I have not spoken of her beauty. It was a beauty to feel, rather than to describe; but her face was all perfection to me; I would not have altered a feature or expression for the world. That night she looked quite radiant. The red sun streamed in through the open casement, and past the snow-white blind, and lay over the half of her sweet face, as she sat by the side of the bed retailing carefully to her auditor's ear the service and sermon of the minister. I contrasted the two—the aged saint, with pain and poverty about her—and the white-draped figure, with the slender shape and the wonderful glory on her face. I thought I never saw such a picture; and some way it struck me that Bessy was old, and I remembered the end of all things; and that led me on, in a tangled web, to associate visions of death with my Lillie. I felt to grow shivery and frightened at my thoughts, and I rose up hastily at a turn in their conversation, and drew Lillie away. And as we were walking slowly down the green pasture which lay between the cottage and my home, Lillie made the proposal to me that we should learn our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

I immediately agreed, though we had never learned so much Scripture before, and I thought she asked it suddenly. But I made no comment, and she continued talking most sweetly and affectingly. She remarked upon the evening, its mellow light, and the surrounding tints of the autumn.

And from that she digressed, in her simple childlike way, to the happy life we two led; and then she spoke of Francisco and of her own brother, both so kind and good; and apparently invited me to join her in thanks to God. I am sure I did so; for I felt, though but imperfectly, what a favoured creature I was; and Lillie's vast superiority over me made me humbler day by day,—humbler in a certain vein.

We parted with more than our usual fondness when we reached my garden-gate; and I stood watching her receding white figure as it moved through the trees, until it was no more seen. As I turned into the house, I wondered, as I had wondered about my mother, what I ever should do *without Lillie*.

## CHAPTER V.

The days gone by,—'tis sad, yet sweet,  
 To list the strain of parted hours ;  
 To think of those we loved to meet  
 When children, 'mid a thousand flowers !  
 The days gone by—oh ! is there not  
 A charm—a feeling in those words,—  
 A music, ne'er to be forgot,  
 Struck from the memory's sweetest chords !

The days gone by—they have a spell  
 To burst the cerements of the grave,  
 And from oblivion's deepest cell,  
 The forms we loved and lost—to save !  
 Time may not fade those looks of light,  
 Still beauteous to the mental eye  
 As the first hour they blessed our sight,  
 In days gone by—in days gone by !

The days gone by—from shore to shore  
 Their ever-lengthening shadows spread,  
 On, on, till Time shall breathe no more,  
 And Earth itself be with the dead :  
 Each brief unnoticed minute bears  
 The mandate of its God on high ;  
 And death and silence are the heirs  
 Of days gone by—of days gone by !

SWAIN.

was a happy day at Lynwood Hall, when Francisco came  
 ne at Christmas. He was somewhat grown, and more  
 letic, and school had evidently agreed with him. And,  
 ough he could not compete in studies with the boys of  
 college, he had gained a splendid prize. His eyes  
 rked as he produced it. It was a copy of the poetical  
 ks of Burns, the magnate of the Scotch people. Dr. Guth-  
 the head master of the school, was himself a native of  
 tland, and shared intensely the world-awarded appre-  
 ion of the genius of the Ayrshire ploughman. For while  
 works of Burns were cherished religiously in the heart  
 is own Scotland, the English, and every European people

were thus, long ago, vying with each other to do him legitimate homage. Upon the fly-leaf of this handsome volume, of more value than the book itself, was written, in the hand of Dr. Guthrie—"Presented to Francisco de la Vega Cameron, as a testimony of his uniform attention to his studies, and his honourable and gentlemanlike conduct."

Was not I proud that moment? So was mamma. I always knew how she felt. She went round and kissed him; and he turned up his bright face to acknowledge the caress, sliding his arm round her neck. While papa, I was sure, was quite delighted, though he scarcely said a word.

That Christmas we had the merriest time. We got up little dances, we four, with the aid of mamma or Miss Davies to play for us; and occasionally, the young people of our neighbours accepted and returned our festivities.

Francisco was an elegant dancer. I never could dance very well. I was taller and more awkward than Lillie, and slow dances suited me best. They used to waltz, Francisco and Lillie, while it was my delight to watch them; but they never waltzed long, for Lillie grew fatigued, and then she got a red spot in her cheek, and complained of being stupidly tired.

Cranston Barton never could endure dancing. He would not curtail our enjoyment, therefore joined in that as well as other amusements, if it happened to be desirable that he should so do. But he did not enjoy it, and that made him a bad partner. He and I really did not shine, especially in unison, in the evolutions of a dance.

There lived near to Lynwood an agreeable family whose acquaintance my parents cultivated. They had one son and one daughter, the former my age, the latter three years younger. Lucy's tender age precluded her from entering into much of our society, but Edward was frequently one of us; and when Cranston could be taught no worthier dancing, I took Edward for my current partner. I was at ease with him, for our movements agreed; he made the best of me. He was quite a proficient, and light and graceful. I never made blunders when I danced with him; I liked also much to talk with him, and Lillie liked him too. He *became a general favourite* that winter, and Francisco was *much at the Raymonds*. He would spend a day there some-

times, a thing we could not have persuaded him to do at any other house. He often talked of little Lucy, Edward Raymond's sister. He said she was such a pretty child, and had such an air of a grand lady ; he wished he could paint her portrait. We laughingly advised the commission of an artist to meet this particular desire ; but Francisco declared he would prefer never to have the portrait, than that any gentleman, professional or the contrary, should so observe the features of her face as to make a copy of them. "He should paint it himself one day—most probably from memory."

Our family party divided again, our school recommenced, and spring was again at hand. One morning the Raymonds had sent me an invitation to spend the day at the Priory ; and although my vacation had been long, and had only recently terminated, I felt very much disposed to accept it.

I sought out my mother, with the note in my hand, leaving Edward alone in the dining-room—a tempting escort, standing with his riding-whip in hand—and I so fond of riding.

Mamma replied that I had better decline, having just recommenced my studies, as there did not appear any urgent reason why the invitation was given. I felt annoyed—I expressed a great wish to be allowed to go ; mamma was as firm in dissent. Vexed and disappointed, I permitted her to see that I shed some tears.

In a moment she was by my side. "Do not cry, my daughter ! Mary, do not cry ! Pray let your own wishes dictate, since you desire it so much. I will yield in this instance. My dear child, you can go." But I no longer desired it—the victory was gained ; but her unusual flexibility surprised me.

My mother rarely revoked her decisions, and her manner now altogether amazed me.

"Mamma," I entreated, "forgive me ! I would not go for the world—how could I have been so undutiful ! I beg of you, mamma, to forgive me."

She bent down and kissed me over and over again, and took both my hands and looked intently at me, and then *again she embraced me*. I thought her so very strange ; *but, oh, how sweet !*

But Edward was waiting in the dining-room. We went out together, hand clasped in hand,—my darling mother and I,—and she explained to the disappointed Edward that I could not leave home that day. So he made his adieux and rode off, and I felt no regret at all at the sound of his horse's hoofs, though ten minutes before I had been wild to scour the country on the back of my own brown mare.

At breakfast the following morning mamma did not appear; she had had a bad night, and an accession of pain in her head, from which more or less she had suffered for several years. "She was remaining quietly in bed;" so said my father.

I made the breakfast, as I was accustomed to do sometimes when mamma was present; for she wished me, she said, to do handily little things about the family. I sent up some tea, made to suit mamma, and butter and bread of my own preparing; and when my duties at the table were accomplished, I ran upstairs to ask mamma how she was.

I entered the room, and approached her bed with no step for a chamber of sickness; and I must have rocked the bed as I leaned against it, for I saw a contraction of her face; but my mother did not reprove me. She looked very ill, quite pale, and as if she had felt long pain. The cup of tea stood untasted on the table. I anxiously asked how she was, and what I could do for her comfort. She replied very gently that her head was bad, and she required nothing but quiet. I sat down a moment; she inquired for my health, and if I had slept through the night. I had, indeed—one long unbroken sleep. Then she closed her eyes, and lay quite still, while I watched her.

How beautiful was my mother's face! it was just as lovely reposing there, with that little white cap, and hair pushed back under it, as it was when she was dressed. And this morning it looked like marble; there was not an atom of colour upon it, save that the lips were just tinted. She looked so ill, I felt quite shocked, and presently went down to papa. I think I alarmed him, for he answered hastily, and then went himself upstairs. Soon after, Miss Davies came into the room, with note-paper in her hand; she was *going to write to our family physician, to tell him mamma was unwell, and to request that he would drive over. The*

letter was despatched, and I went upstairs again to my mother's room.

My hand was on the door, when I heard a sound of talking—my mother's voice, but low and smothered; and then I distinctly heard my father's,—“My dearest, do not! I cannot bear it; indeed, indeed, I cannot.” I crept away. I must not intrude upon them; but what could they be talking about?

Dr. Allison came; he was shown upstairs; he spoke to me on the landing. He remained some time in my mother's room, then my father and he came out together. Papa desired me to send Miss Davies to sit beside mamma; I flew to summon her. Where should I go? To those two men below, whose long faces alarmed me?—I never had seen my father so wan; or above—where my mother lay ill? Ah, there—that was where I would be! I stole to her side. My governess was kind; she drew me tenderly towards her, and we did not speak, but watched mamma as she lay just as I had left her, only now the colour was mounting to her brow. She looked as if she were feverish. Some time elapsed—it might have been an hour, it might have been more—and my father returned to the room with a person I did not know. I found she was a nurse. She looked kindly and pitying, with a nice quiet way with her. I thought mamma would not dislike her. But why this stranger brought into the house—why could not her own servants wait upon mamma? Why not Miss Davies, papa, or I?

Papa beckoned me out of the room; by the door stood Lillie, very pale. We neither of us thought of crying. We two girls went down stairs with papa; he shut the door of the library, and walked up and down the room. He seemed very much agitated. At length he said, “Lillie, will your mother come?”

“Oh yes, sir, mamma will be here immediately; we did not know of it until Dr. Allison called.”

“Did not know of it!” I cried; “did not know of what? What is the matter with mamma, papa?”

“My child, your mamma is, I fear, very ill. We must take all the care we can; it is so sudden to us all, my dear, that we cannot tell what is the matter.”



Again he paced the long room.

I cried out, "Mamma! mamma!"

Lillie came a step nearer to me, but she did not speak again; and at that moment a carriage drove rapidly up to the door, and directly Mrs. Barton entered the room. She looked surprised and alarmed. She shook hands with papa, and he followed her out of the room.

"Oh, Lillie!" I exclaimed, "what is amiss with mamma? what did Dr. Allison tell you?"

"We were sitting at breakfast, for we were late this morning, and Dr. Allison came in. He said, 'Mrs. Barton, our friends are in trouble at the Hall.' Of course we all started up. 'Yes,' he said, 'Mrs. Cameron is not well; I wish you would go up presently and see her.' Mamma rang directly for her bonnet and cloak, and, fortunately, the ponies were ordered for us to drive over to Milscombe. I did not wait for mamma; I ran here through the orchard, and had just arrived when you came from your mother's room, for Dr. Allison was detained, he said, between this house and ours. But tell me, dear, how did it come on?"

"I can tell you nothing: mamma was so sweet yesterday, when I wished to spend the day at the Raymonds'. She made me love her so dearly, as she often has done lately; and those things make me afraid. But she was not ill until this morning, and papa was not alarmed; she remained in bed, having had no sleep, and feeling one of her headaches. I ran up to see her when breakfast was over, and was frightened to see her quite poorly. Then I told papa, and he went upstairs, and they sent for Dr. Allison, and the strange nurse came—and I know nothing more—but oh! I feel so unhappy."

Lillie's mother came in while we were talking, and begged of me not to think of going to my mother's bedroom, as Dr. Allison had ordered perfect quiet, and we should hear it there occurred any change.

"But do tell us if you think her so very ill, Mrs. Barton," I exclaimed.

"My dear, your mamma is undoubtedly very ill—it is such a very sudden seizure, too; but we must have patience. *There has been no delay in applying such remedies as we hope will bring about her recovery.* We must always trust;

and we know that whatever befalls us is for the best : do we not, my dear child ?”

“ I do not understand you, Mrs. Barton,” I cried, struggling to misunderstand the magnitude of the calamity to which she alluded.

But Mrs. Barton left the room ; and alone with Lillie, for once she could not suffice. The shadows of the night drew on apace. The fire was dying out ; no lights were in the room, and we two were close together, crouching down upon the hearth-rug, when Miss Davies looked in.

“ No lamps ! and the fire nearly out, my children ! Nay, this will not do. Come away this moment. Your papa, my dear Mary, is in the dining-room. Straighten your hair, my dear children, and go and sit with him.”

We did so mechanically ; but that was all we did. Neither of us spoke to the other. There was a sound of dinner, but my father waved his hand impatiently, and the servants brought no dinner there—nor did we touch any. I got my father a glass of wine, which he did not refuse, and, a circumstance rare with him, he took a second and a third. Then I found some cake—he partook of that also. And Lillie and I ate, because I knew that mamma objected to our being long without eating. And again we settled into our monotonous dreariness, broken shortly by the entrance of Mrs. Barton. She summoned out papa mysteriously. He returned more unhappy than before.

“ What is it, papa ?” I said, starting at my own voice.

“ She is worse, Mary ; but we must trust in God.”

Worse !—my mother was worse !

There is a step in the hall—it passes upstairs ; we all know it is Dr. Allison’s. Papa follows him. They pass and re-pass on the flooring above us. An age intervenes. Miss Davies comes down. She walks up to us and begins to cry. We ask no questions ; we know how it is. Indeed then I began to feel that mamma would die. We saw papa no more that night. I asked to go and look at her, but they said—better not ; better not for me and for her. Then I submitted.

Lillie stayed to sleep with me that night. We went to bed at twelve, but we could get no rest. We opened our door constantly to hear what news. It did not vary.

Early in the morning horses galloped from the stables ; a groom was sent for Francisco. Oh, the thrill of that moment ! I felt as if my heart rent in twain.

Mamma was dying, and she wished to see him ; that was just what it meant. I hurried on my clothes and Lillie hers ; and now no one should deter me. In my thinnest shoes and my morning dress, noiseless along the passages I sped, to the chamber of sickness. I heard her voice, but it was loud and discordant. I heard it again—it was a shriek. I turned the handle of the door—it was fastened within. Some one crossed the room and spoke ; it was the nurse.

“ Who is there ? ”

“ It is me. Ah ! do let me come in. ”

There was some hesitation, and then Mrs. Barton appeared at the door. As it opened, I heard mamma speaking rapidly and incoherently.

Mrs. Barton closed the door and took my hands in her own.

“ My child, how are you this morning ? ”

“ Don’t ask me how I am, ” I cried ; “ how is mamma ? May I not see her ? Oh, how hard it is that her only child may not see her ! What is the matter with her, that she speaks in that way ; is it brain fever that she has ? ”

“ It were better you should not see her, my dear ; the sight would only distress you. This is the strength of the fever battling with our remedies, which, I trust and pray, may be efficacious ; but we must be patient still, my dear, and remember all is in the hand of God. ”

I could not recognize this waiting, this lying passive under a threatened terror. It made me feel more than ever rebellious to hear Mrs. Barton speak in this way.

“ But if I might only see her, ” I persisted ; “ I would not permit her to see me. ”

Mrs. Barton shook her head.

“ She could not recognize you, dearest, if she saw you now. ”

Oh, how dreadful ; not recognize me—her daughter ! I no longer desired to enter that room. I crept shiveringly back to Lillie.

At noon, Francisco arrived. He was flushed with his ride, and but partially aware of the gravity of the occasion. *He came quickly in, looking like life and hope in the midst of our desolation,*

"Oh, Francisco, my brother," was all I could say.

My manner alarmed him. Lillie intervened; she gave him all the particulars. He was greatly moved. I never saw such a change as her words brought over him.

Again Dr. Allison made his visit; this time he was not alone. Another and eminent physician from a distance accompanied him. They were long in my mother's room. Then they came down into the library, where they consulted alone. They then rang for my father to join them. They went away with clouded brows, and it was night again—the night of the 22nd of February, and I had not seen my mother for thirty-six hours. Was it only thirty-six hours? How long it seemed!

She remained delirious. They only approached her whose province it was to watch. We spent another terrible night, but the tidings of the morning were hopeful. Mamma was calm. She had slept a little; there certainly must be hope!

The physicians came, and we waited their verdict with eager, throbbing hearts. They scarcely lingered to see papa. I was angry Dr. Allison should so hurry away. I was sitting in the library with Francisco and Lillie—we were all talking a little—when Miss Davies entered, saying to me, "Miss Mary, your mamma wishes for you." I sprang up; she caught my arm as I was rushing past her.

"Be quite gentle, my dear, and very composed; do not on any account ruffle your dear mamma."

I ruffle mamma. What unnecessary caution! I was soon beside her bed. What a change in the room! All those things about, looking like sickness—the phials, the cups, the various unusual articles; but stepping on, I saw only her.

My impulse was to utter a cry, but I was not so mad. I gazed down upon her—my darling mother. My heart died within me, for I drank in the whole. Already she was an angel. No mere mortal brow could bear an impress like that. She stretched out her hand, and I clasped her fingers and leaned down to kiss them. Then I kissed her lips, lovingly, lingeringly. Oh, what did I feel!—a slight spasm passed over her face, and she breathed very quickly.

The nurse said, whisperingly, "You must not lean over *er, miss.*"

I stood upright then, my eyes riveted. Then she spoke,—"My Mary!"

It seemed as if the sound of her voice unlocked the flood-gates of my heart. But I nerved myself, and listened.

"My Mary!" she repeated, "I wish to speak to you, my child—my only child! I shall not be well again, dear, on earth—I shall never rise from this bed!" I was gasping, but I yet subdued myself; and she drew a long breath and went on. The nurse, with a delicacy not always found in her order, had moved noiselessly away.

"I want to bid you, Mary, not to forget me."

I gave a start of pain.

"I know you will not forget me, dear, and if you remember me, you will attend to my parting wishes."

It was a long sentence—the tired breath must recover.

Again she went on:—

"You will watch over your father's happiness, my precious child; you will do what you can to supply your mother's place to him, and to Francisco, and to my poor people; you will read your Bible, my Mary dear, every day—and we shall meet again at God's right hand, where there are no partings, dear."

She was nearly exhausted with speaking these sentences, but evidently something more remained yet to be uttered.

I moistened her lips, as I had seen the nurse do, and bathed her hands.

"You will watch over your high spirit, my child—you know, *blessed are the meek.*"

She lay back upon her pillows, as if her desire was accomplished—it was over, and she was incapable of another word.

The nurse re-entered. I was never more alone with mamma. I stood afterwards in the moonlight in that same room, when flowers were lying about her. And that which so cold and still lay there—oh could that be mamma!

Later in this day she was left alone with Francisco. He told me, afterwards, the various charges she gave him. One was, that she left me to him for a sister. We did not go to bed at all that night.

## CHAPTER VI.

A seraph rose up when the bright day was dawning,  
His face shone like gems with the dew of the morning,  
And he cried, as his foot on the pavement he planted,  
“Away to the work that the Lord hath commanded.”

“Up Aziel! time passes! thou art bidden to go  
On a mission of mercy to yon world below;  
My heart beats with rapture, I long to be there,  
I long for another our blest lot to share.”

In a kingdom of Japhet, in a bower of the west,  
Where love-flowers blossom, the brightest and best,  
A daughter of earth on death's cold couch is sleeping;  
The lord of her youth is convulsively weeping.

They watch'd there beside her through all the long daytime;  
The silent halls gleam'd in the pale midnight ray;  
And still o'er her white lips the light zephyr waver'd—  
The breath of mortality passing away.

The angels have sped on their lofty commission,  
And round the fond mother their guardian wings spread.  
They follow no will save the Highest's decision,  
Whose glorified presence about them is shed.

The angels have carried the soul of the rescued  
From care and from danger, from pain and from sin,  
To the portals of Paradise, over the mountains  
Which lead to that Beulah land mortals may win.

The gates are wide open, flung wide to receive them,  
And straight is the bright path that leads to the throne;  
The cherubs have clothed her in garments of glory,  
And now she is prostrate before it alone;

And the spirit released from its mortal communion,  
Is merged in that hour in the kingdom of light;  
And the lord, and the child, and the home (earth's triunion),  
Alike are forgotten in the heavenly birthright.

The next day was Thursday, the 24th. At twelve o'clock  
mother died. I was kneeling by her side, with her hand  
mine, when the last breath came. Without a struggle,  
without a sigh, she yielded up her spirit. We waited to

catch yet another breath, but it came not—in time. For her the earth was over; and we, oh, what were we! I cannot describe it, that terrible time; the sorrow that mocked at words—my madness, my father's inconsolable state, the deep grief of Francisco.

I saw their figures who came about me, but they had no tangible shape. Only Lillie was ever near me. There were nights and days, but I counted them not. I held nightly vigils in the hallowed room. And the 1st of March dawned.

They brought my black dress, and strangers arrived, and I knew it was the funeral. And that was the last that I did know for many days and weeks; and when I looked up, all things were strange. I lay in a sick chamber myself, fondly tended; and presently I learned that weeks were gone since that mournful day which so lucidly broke upon me; that I too had been ill, and was like to die, but that I had been spared for my father's consolation. And how he loved me—how kind were they all. Only *one* was wanting. And so I came down from my room, and took my seat in my mother's chair, feeling that I sat there for ever; and I made the tea as I used to do, and we were tranquil, at least, in our grief.

It was May when I went with Lillie Barton to look at my mother's grave, for I was long regaining my strength, and I knew that people shook their heads and said my illness was hereditary, all unusual for such a child, and doubtless I should follow my mother.

The grave was placed alone, on this side of the church, just beyond the gravel path, and two large elm-trees spread their branches above it, waving and careering in the air. It had a tombstone already affixed, and I knelt on the green grass to read the inscription. It was, "Sacred to the Memory of Amy Cameron, the beloved wife of Jesse Cameron, who departed this life the 24th of February, 18 . . in the 34th year of her age. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.'"

Long I lingered, and we shed many tears. I believed that my loss was irreparable, and so truly it was, for no after-day could have been so bitter, had she survived. But God sees not as we see.

That summer I was twelve years old. Miss Davies remained with us to continue my education, and Lillie came as usual for the space of another year. I remembered mamma's injunctions—how could they ever be absent from my mind ! and I did my best to console my father ; I wrote more frequently to Francisco ; and Lillie and I spent a great deal of time in visiting the cottagers. We established a system of prize offerings to stimulate the scholars, and we now regularly taught in the Sabbath school. The winter of that year was very dreary ; each heart, bearing its own bitterness, essayed to hide from other sight grief that would increase the burden. But my father and I wept bitterly together when the anniversaries came round. Yet spring was refreshing, as its wont. As sweetly trilled the little birds, as delicious was the scent of the violets, as if death had not been near ; and we watered the rose on my mother's grave, and not all our hot-house plants bore buds as fair as that.

After the Midsummer vacation my Lillie went to school. It was thought a change of education would benefit us both ; but papa could not spare me, and Lillie went alone. I felt our parting much ; so also did she. But she was always content ; good, tranquil Lillie ! So, for the first time in our lives, we were separated.

But Lillie did not go very far away. We could constantly write, and I should sometimes visit her ; thus we, who were like sisters, beguiled our parting.

And we did write the most tender letters ; but hers were so much better than mine. There was this great difference. Hers were beautiful in themselves, while mine were only a running annotation upon her thoughts. Then the holidays were happy—they gave Lillie and I each other ; and papa had begun to smile again, and I was strong in health and hope ; and, though we never forgot my mother, the first great shadow was dissolving away. So is it ever in time—time, time the merciful—the soother of all wounds ! We think time's waves can never wash away ; but when a few of them have rolled between ourselves and our afflictions, we raise our drooping heads—hereafter we *may* smile. Yes, those holidays gave us each other—Lillie, and I, and Francisco. And now Francisco discovered the bias which had grown *within him for years*. When my father asked on his four-



teenth birthday, if Francisco had ever thought of a profession, we were all startled by the tone of the boy's almost fierce reply—"Yes, sir; I can follow but one profession!"

"And what is that profession, my boy?" asked my father kindly.

"The profession of arms, sir; I shall return to my mother's country."

"I trust not, my boy; it would grieve me that you should. The sole son of the Camerons, there is room for you in England."

Francisco's eyes flashed fire. He was not angry, but so deeply moved. I came to the rescue.

"But the profession, papa—you do not object to the profession?"

"By no means, my dear, if your cousin decidedly prefers it. If it is a boyish fancy, I would wish other things for him, more compatible with tranquil life. I don't wish for another wanderer; but we will say no more of that, since, my lad, it vexes you. I have no fear that my dear brother's only and dutiful son should set at naught the counsel of the guardian his father chose for him. If Francisco's wishes are fixed on a military vocation," he continued "let me know it, and I will take steps in consequence."

"My dear uncle," cried Francisco, "I hope I may never be such a recreant as to show you ingratitude. In the matter of my choice—it is certainly made. Dr. Guthrie is also aware of it, but he did not encourage my taste, because he told me you might disapprove of it."

"Dr. Guthrie," said my father, "has acted like a sensible man, and a man who has sons of his own. I will, however, see Dr. Guthrie; his opinion on most subjects I rate very high."

My father invited Dr. Guthrie to dinner, and we found that one of that gentleman's brothers was a professor attached to a military college; therefore his opinion with regard to Francisco's prospects was particularly valuable.

In the month of July it was decided that Francisco should enter a college in Surrey, and thither, early in the succeeding month, our anxious thoughts, and fervent hopes, and fond *affection followed him.*

No event of moment occurred between that period and our all attaining our seventeenth birthdays—Lillie, Francisco, and I.

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## CHAPTER VII.

And *you*, Lucy Raymond !  
Child of earth, with golden hair,  
You with your fetterless spirit,  
You whom men call fair,—

Shall yours be a bright path  
Through the world's winding way,  
Will you value blessings ?  
Ah ! who shall say ?

WE saw a great deal of the Raymonds ; they were among our best friends : we sometimes stayed a week at their house.

Lucy Raymond had grown a very lovely little girl : she had been at school with Lillie. Cranston Barton was studying for his degree at Trinity. He was to enter the Church, in accordance with his father's wishes ; and we did not see him that summer.

We gave a little fête on the occasion of my birthday : we invited about twenty young friends. There was a picnic in the meadows in the early part of the day, when everything went off delightfully.

We dined in primitive fashion by the river side ; we ladies attended upon in knightly fashion. There were grand speeches, proposals of healths and responding thanks thereto. Afterwards I told the fortunes of my friends, by a magic wheel of my own, that is, all who would incur the risk ; as of course there was weal and woe in my fortunes and no respect of persons.

Francisco and Lucy Raymond presented themselves at my shrine ; and though I exclaimed at the singularity of two presentations at once, they each persisted in remaining to abide the other's fate.

To Lucy I replied, "Your treasure is the happiness of another committed to your care."

To Francisco : "Your treasure is unreal and visionary,

and only exists in your own vague imagination." To which respectively the head bent down, and the fiery tongue rang out, "Witches made favourites, as he could prove; or why should he have a lash when Lucy was so mercifully dealt with?" And Lillie Barton's fatality syllabled for her, "Your treasure change cannot wither, neither can time destroy; it is a conscience void of reproach, and a true heart at ease."

But these are only a few of our remarkable characteristics, for I had numerous leaves. It caused an immense excitement, when, in the midst of my spells, an original specimen of the necromancing art was seen crossing the meadows and coming quickly towards us. She was naturally attracted by such a promising group as we were just then, and doubtless brought her reason to bear on our appearances before she reached us.

She was a fine gipsy woman, having the black hair, the black eyes, and bright-coloured garments of her tribe. She laid down a bag of clothes-pegs close by my side, and turning her large eyes to the spot where Francisco stood, she cried, "You're born to cross the water, sir; and there's many a pretty lady 'll break her heart for you!"

Such a home-speech was irresistible; and though his dark skin, and his proximity to several fair girls, at that moment readily furnished her with both her prophecies, she lost none of our interest on that account. The party and the spot were alike fitly chosen to suit the gipsy's mysteries; and many of our palms were duly conned by her eyes, to decipher the courses of the lines of our lives; and she did not read very truly, as most of us could afterwards have testified, had the same party met again, and had they remembered the gipsy's intervention on that sunny afternoon. Edward Raymond was hovering near me all the day, and as ever, was very agreeable; indeed, he was quite one of us now.

As the evening wore on, we adjourned to the house, where our ball-room was prepared: it had no peculiar decorations, nor did it look like only a ball-room, since they who peopled it were light of heart, gay, joyous, and happy. I cannot imagine that one bitter feeling could have found entrance there, so entirely did all appear at ease. We girls *ran upstairs to arrange our dresses and straighten and adorn*

our hair. I wore a new dress for that *gala* night, but it was simply a white muslin one ; and Francisco had made it a favour with me that I should put lilies of the vale in my hair, in order to be like Lucy Raymond, whom those simple flowers suited best ; and my brother told me he had a fancy that one evening to see us resemble each other in some one point.

So I pleased him, though I should have chosen red and large spreading flowers to deck my hair, had I suited my style, and because another had said to me, that "the *roses* became me best."

I descended to the drawing-room with Lillie on my arm, and there was papa awaiting us. We had tea and coffee, and a variety of refreshments ; and then Edward Raymond claimed the hand I had promised him for the first quadrille and waltz. Lillie could not have danced those dances, or I should remember seeing her. Francisco danced with the sister of Edward, who looked all light and radiance, which did not partake of her dress, though that was very elegant. She wore a blue gossamer, of a very fine fabric : it was made quite low and short, for Lucy was only fourteen, and, strange to say, at that age she did not wish to look older. The lilies hung in her golden curls, the which floated to her waist ; and those two creatures made a splendid pair.

I was fatigued and giddy with waltzing long, when Edward Raymond found me a seat, just so happily removed from publicity that I could repose at ease and observe all else that was doing. Edward brought me some wine, which he bade me take, playfully daring me to disobey, and continually talked in a rambling fashion, very unusual with him, very agreeable ; but I wondered what it meant, and I saw papa occasionally observing him, and that in a way peculiar ; but the happy hours of that festive night fled on apace. All things must end, and so our dances ceased.

Then followed the adieus and the last departures ; Francisco had accompanied the Raymonds home, and Lillie and I went to sleep in each other's arms.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Sweet star ! in life's young morn laid by,  
Emblem of autumn's sun,  
Shaded before her worth was felt,  
Before her course was run.

Before her course was run—say we !  
God hath not deem'd it so ;—  
Shall mortal tongue presume to judge  
The hand that laid her low ?

THE following day was far advanced when my sleepy eyes opened. My dreams had been very conflicting. Lillie was wide awake, to my surprise, and she looked fatigued and pale ; but we talked over yesterday, and compared our notes, and both were delighted. We were young, and our hearts were fresh, no wonder we felt great pleasure in such simple and playful pastime. I only wished that Lillie was stronger ; I could not bear to see what a slight effort now overcame her.

About this time my father remarked Lillie's fragile appearance. He was the first to comment upon it to Mr. and Mrs. Barton, who, accustomed to their daughter's delicacy, observed no more than her usual fragility, and could not see any serious symptoms discernible about her now. She herself did not complain, not even to me. Yet as I am sure that this world was fair to her unfolding sense, so sure am I that she felt she should soon have done with it for ever. Perhaps she measured the strength of our love, and would spare us a lingering parting. There was beauty to her in every leaf, music in every rill ; and they who see best the divinest things, most long to drink of them. Yes, life was sweet ! and she clung to its flowers, while already the celestial groves were prepared for her holy tread.

*Miss Davies had left me to make a home for her brother's daughters, who were living at present in Gibraltar. At the age when most they required care, they also had lost their mother.*

I felt very much in parting with this faithful friend. The many claims she had upon my gratitude and my love, forbade that I should ever forget her, or cease to prize her invaluable services to me. My father also felt her departure in our contracted household, and it was debated for a time whether or not he should seek a substitute for my kind governess-companion, in some other lady who could chaperone me into society, and be a comfort to him and to me at home.

But I was seventeen years old and more, and I was mistress of Lynwood Hall, and I did not wish to share my honours, and I had a great horror of strangers. If dear Miss Davies could have stayed for ever, I should have been delighted; but as she could not, I did not desire any one else in her stead.

“CROYDON, 20th Sept. 182-.

“MY DEAR SISTER,—I was delighted to have your beautiful long letter, with all that news of home in it. No wonder Lion behaved so well, good dog! You see, dear, he is a well-instructed animal, and reflects credit upon his master who is away;—but what makes Lillie pale? have some of your young gallants stolen the roses from her cheeks, and the bright light of her eye? Desire her, on my part, to scorn and get well. I wish you would send up that unfinished oil-painting; I might take up a brush. Percival's sister is a very pretty girl, but too cold for me. I love your high heads—you haughty young ladies! but I like hearts that are impressible with them; and my experience tells me the two are quite compatible. I like the sunbeam, and not the avalanche; but I need not say that to you.

“I have a little letter from ‘mi Amada.’ Heaven protect her spotless soul! Do you know, Mary, if I do not marry Lucy, I will never have another bride! But I shall,—of course, of course. By the bye, I wish you would speak to my uncle about a little deeper dip into my family purse; you know how. But, dear, I am very economical; yet I cannot make the shiners last. What is a fellow to do? There's Blanchard, and Percival, and all that set, giving champaign breakfasts, and they will have me, and it looks so odd to refuse; but, upon my word, I can't stand it.

“*My liabilities surpass my means*, dear, Don't laugh; but

request my excellent uncle kindly to increase my fortune, to meet my expenditure. Dear girl, I am really in earnest, as you would see if you were on the spot. How I wish you were!—should I not be proud? and would they not all admire? Sir Tatton would paw in the precincts of Croydon like a war-horse, which he ought to be.—Adieu, dear sister.

“Yours,

“FRANCISCO.”

“LYNWOOD HALL, 24th Sept. 183-.

“MY DEAREST FRANCISCO,—I received your letter—many thanks for such a long one. I am glad you appreciate Lion's behaving with the honour due to his name. It is a great grief to me about our dear Lillie. I assure you, Francisco, I cannot jest, for she is thinner and weaker every day; and Mr. and Mrs. Barton are now seriously alarmed. Dr. Allison, who attends her constantly, does not encourage them in their wish to take Lillie out of England. They think Madeira is the place for her, or any much warmer climate than this, in which she must die. What words I am writing! Dr. Grant, the other physician, agrees with her parents; but he does not know her constitution so well as dear Dr. Allison. Lillie has not a wish herself, she is willing to go or remain. If she goes, of course I go with her. Papa is quite willing; because, although he will miss me, he is in health. It is all to be settled to-day. Oh! you cannot think how grieved I am; I really don't know what I do, I am so alarmed about Lillie. I mentioned the other subject to dearest papa; he says he is afraid you are rather extravagant. You do spend *rather* a great deal, do you not, dear? I would not mind how others spend money—we know who excels in other things. How proud we shall be that day we know of, when the sister who so loves you will present you with your sword, and buckle it to your side with her own hands. I hear Lillie's step—so faltering it is—I must rush to meet her. Here she is; she bids me go on, but I have only to conclude. She sends her love. Cranston has not passed at Trinity; they are so disappointed. *Adios, mi queridissimo*.—Ever your dear sister,

“MARY.”

“P.S. I have talked a great deal of you to papa, as you may be sure; but I find I have said very little on that subject in

this letter. He is going to write to you. Edward and Lucy were here last night. She looked sweet as usual ; she had on a white frock, and a hat with blue about it, and your sort of feather. She really is the loveliest little creature I ever saw in all my life. There ! will that please you ? but I say it because I think it, sir. Once more, adieu."

Lillie Barton faded perceptibly. There was no longer any doubt as to the termination of her disease. Dr. Allison spoke with my father, and he overruled the proposal to take Lillie abroad. I was constantly with her ; if she came not to the Hall, I was with them. She was wheeled about in a little carriage by Wells, the old gardener. We did not talk much on these occasions ; she would hold my hand, I walking by her side, and every moment realizing how changed she had become. We left off our calls at the cottages,—they were too trying. Lillie's breathing was oppressed, and it pained her to talk in the air ; and she must speak to any whom she saw. Also, the poor make very singular remarks—not that they would have affected Lillie, but she evidently longed for calmness ; she did not talk to me even, now that it approached, of her impending doom. I have often regretted she did not : from the confines of the grave her confidences would have been marvellous. She looked most beautiful—exactly like an angel, to whom not a particle of pollution could cling. Her long fair curls lay over her thin face, and her eyes grew larger and larger every day. Francisco was mistaken when he had fancied them less bright—they literally glittered ; and day by day more brilliant rose the crimson on her cheek. She was fond of talking on general things now, when she could talk at all. The wonderful goodness of God, and the beauty of His appointments ; the glory of nature, and the responsibilities of our souls, and our love for each other—these were the topics of which she never wearied.

One day, engaged by callers, I had not seen Lillie. We were sitting at luncheon, papa and I ; and I was going to the Vicarage directly, when I saw from the window the little carriage with Lillie in it, coming over the green. I ran out to meet her. She told me she felt much better ; a great *pleasure overwhelmed me at the sound of these words, though her appearance should surely have belied them.*



I kissed her, and gathered some roses and laid them upon her lap ; then Wells drew her on to the door. I took Lillie in my arms—her weight was nothing, and carried her into the house ; I laid her upon the drawing-room couch, and knelt down by the side of her. She took a curl of my hair in her wasted fingers—how white its darkness made them ! then she bent her eyes upon me so fixedly I could not bear the gaze. I bowed down my head and wept ; all the high hopes which her first words had raised were gone again to the winds. There could be no end but one to a beauty which was not of the earth.

“ Mary, can you move the couch ? ” said Lillie, “ I should like to lie by the window : I want to look at the view.”

I wheeled round the couch with great ease, careful that she should not be shaken. I watched her take in the distant clouds as they moved along in the heavens, the far off landscape where the shadowy trees rose up against the sky, the green fields where the white-faced bullocks lay interspersed with browsing sheep. Then she looked on the river, with its winding banks yellow with buttercups ; and the low hanging fence, at the bottom of our garden, of the York and Lancastrian rose. Then she caught the arbour on the right, the tall weeping willow which for many happy years had been her boudoir and mine ; and she noted the flowers with wonderful precision, as if she numbered them ; and the little birds that flew chirping about, they all had her tender farewell. Lastly, she turned to me.

“ Dear Mary, how happy we have been ! What a blissful life was mine ! What a sister I have possessed ! I believe, in heaven I shall be able to watch my beloved ones on the earth ; and we shall *all* meet again, sooner or later. God has been very good. I never could praise as I wished on earth—my tongue will be unloosed in heaven. Dear Mary, you will enter there—is it not so ? And, meanwhile, you will love papa and mamma, and take some care of them. Cranston, too, you will love for my sake—in your large heart there is room.”

She spoke slowly, giving each thought a thrilling and mysterious pathos. My feeling was such as could not be told ; *but the scene reminded me distinctly of my dear mother's death. I had Lillie, it was true, that moment, but soon she*

would be afar. Yes ; what had the world that could prison in it a heavenly soul like hers ? The hope, the glory, or the joy, was insufficient to attract the pure soul from its God. She would be glorified—I should remain ; she would be at rest—I should be struggling. The opening expanse of celestial bowers which waited her vanishing form rose high in the heavens, above the spot where the clouds of my destiny lay.

Already I snuffed the breath of pain—already I saw my grief. Yes ; this was death and life : kneeling in her saintly presence, with her breath upon my brow, what would I not have given in my intensity of yearning to have lain down and died beside her. I was young and ignorant ; but I had read of trial, I perceived the terrible might of life, and felt the dread reality of death, yet something within me would fain have chosen the innocent, early grave ; for it saw the hand which, with iron grasp, had laid hold on my happiness, and it gasped for the perfect peace of God in place of human struggles.

I rose to get Lillie the wine she needed ; indeed, it was time—she grew strangely spent. Her eyes roamed wanderingly ;—she was not serene as was her wont. Her brother came in ;—he had expected to find her with me. She gazed on him lovingly, and feebly stretched out her hand. He sat down near her. She sought my hand as well as Cranston's ; then she said, with ineffable sweetness, " I want you always to love one another—you two whom I have loved so much—you will be *her* brother, Cranston, my own now ; and, Mary, you will be *his* sister. Speak a promise, my dear ones, the thought delights me." We each of us gave the assent, which her state and ours made solemn.

On the confines of the eternal world, it consoled her loving spirit to link the bond of a faithful love between us who were yet of time ; and it yielded us manifold consolation. How, when years were past, did the memory of that evening come back to our minds ; and year by year its charm became more sacred in memory of her, when we could smile that she was safe in heaven, where never tempests rage or troubles crush. When she had been years in heaven, *our turmoil had scarce begun* ; and we, in our anguish, *blessed the hand which had carried our loved ones into*

bliss, whence their unforgotten figures beckoned, and where toilfully, painfully, slowly—oft hopelessly—still we struggled to come.

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## CHAPTER IX.

Down the avenue of chestnuts  
I can hear a horseman ride.

THE wintry winds sighed round the grassy knoll where the mortal form of my lovely Lillie in its early grave was resting, where no more the voice of our love could reach, or its selfishness recall.

My life's companion was taken from me, and I was left alone. I saw, hereafter, how many remained to atone for the loss of her, but at that time I felt that I was left in the world alone. Rash child! what is it to be alone? that was not a question which in that hour thy fate had solved to thee. I followed Lillie to her grave, and the sight was so inconceivably solemn to me, who had never before witnessed a burial, that I could afford no consolation to her weeping bereaved ones. I was forcibly driven back upon my mother's loss, by the death and burial of Lillie; I was well nigh broken-hearted, and papa, too, was very sorrowful. While I wore my black dresses, the visible signs of the bitter grief in my heart, when my eyes were blinded with tears, and I never missed a single day to tend the rose and the violet roots already planted there, in consonance with the tender pity of his nature, and when long-hidden hopes could be speechless no longer, since I was in grief and he was afar from me, Edward Raymond sought my hand. Some idea of this had at times occurred to me, especially in the previous summer; but Lillie's death and my withdrawal from all company (for I would see no one for many weeks; I was selfish in my sorrow—I wanted to nurse it—I could not bear condolence), had almost obliterated the impression.

But it came well timed, this offering of love to my young agitated heart. Heaviness was about me; the first beam of day was refreshing and grateful to feverish sense; and

As I reviewed the course of our lives, it was not so very surprising. Our families, so long thrown together, had been intimate for years. There was scarcely an era in bygone childhood with which the Raymonds were not associated; and the undisguised *penchant* of my cousin Francisco for the dear young sister of Edward, which no one approved, they knew not why, and which no one disapproved, had made me her *confidante*. Though still very young, she was one of the early wise, and her feelings in one respect were older than my own.

Three years my junior, you could not perceive that it was so by our words, though her face and form were of that mould which inspires the ideal promise of an eternal youth. You shall hear her described as she was on her fifteenth birthday. Francisco was at home for a brief space, much grown and improved, and losing all traces of boyhood; in frame fast merging to the man. He had been successful throughout his examinations, and professors prophesied great things from his military genius.

He was very excited and very happy at this time. He did not miss Lillie as I expected he would have done. The elastic vigour of opening life thrilled around and about him. He came like a comet into the depths of our solemn winter, for my new love was only in embryo; it had not had time as yet to chase the shadows off the dial.

Francisco rode off on the morning after his arrival, handsome and proud, to visit the Raymonds. I stepped forth from the door with him, and stretched out my hand to take his horse's rein; the creature rebelled at my touch, rearing himself high in the air. He snorted, and arched his glossy neck; but I was not alarmed—I knew nothing about fear; so he tossed the foam from his mouth on my dress, and stamped and curvetted at his will; the groom lingering aside, while Francisco slowly donned his gloves and tested the thong of his hunting-whip, which he always persisted to use, standing the while on the stone steps, admiring the *tableau vivant*. I managed to quiet my mettlesome horse, as his master concluded his preparations. "Now," said Francisco, "my lady of the stole, be pleased to hold my stirrup." I held the stirrup with an

eager hand, for I loved my brother's play ; but his foot barely touched it.

"He wreathed his left hand in the mane,  
And bounded lightly from the plain."

I watched them away in the morning sun, the beautiful horse and the beautiful rider, and had not felt so light of heart for months. The world, after all, had pleasure remaining in it. My beloved Francisco lived ;—my father, my indulgent father, too. I had neglected him of late ; and there stole into my mind the thought of another in that genial moment ; another who, while I yet mused upon him, stood by my side.

Papa had not discussed with me this thing which had broken newly upon us. He could not entertain the loss of his daughter at any early time ; he had not yet been able to establish the fact that that daughter had grown into a woman. But his manner was tenderer than ever before, and I did not require words.

Papa's heart lay open before my sight. I traced its springs and course. I possessed already the dangerous key to interpret the unseen scroll of the mind. The match was a good one in point of property ;—the rank in life was equal ;—the character of my lover unexceptionable, and we had known his disposition for years.

The inference was natural. My father did not hinder a thing that promised happiness ; but it lay at present in dim unreality, where I was content that it should stay. I delighted to see the face of Edward ; it mirrored a phase of perfect beauty in the book of my charms. His features were faultless ; and nothing harsh or discordant could come over them. His still eyes anger never fired ; nor could the sculpture of his lips diverge into a curl. And slight and graceful as his figure was, I only wished that it bespoke a greater strength of frame. But such he was to the outer eye as we wandered along our gardens at Lynwood that morning, his heart as pure in nature's nobility as its faith was true to me.

I talked, I remember, somewhat wildly ; my spirits *were so recently elevated* by the return of Francisco and *this new knowledge*, from the long torpor in which death

and the grave had involved them ; and I felt the growing pleasure of possession—a young girl's gratified pride, together with the clinging resting of the woman. And so I heard the ancient hopes, which had lain in his breast for years.

I blushed at his praises with delicious joy,—I laughed at his trepidation ; and he asked no vow to complete his satisfaction : he was happy in perfect trust.

Then Francisco returned, with Lucy riding with him on her Shetland pony, looking such a fairy reflection, in contrast with his strength. The steed, impetuous in the early morning, had grown happily graver now, and, with his rider, appeared to seek only the pleasure of the lady at their side.

Francisco leant to unbolt the gate, and backed his tall horse leisurely, while the pony stepped through with his light burden, and waited till the others should rejoin them.

Then they cantered towards us up the drive, the wind lifting her hair, while her blue veil streamed behind ; and the faces of both were radiant.

Francisco sprang to the ground ; I passed my arm once more through his rein. Edward knew me, and did not prevent me ; and Francisco lifted Lucy to the ground. They said it was like a summer's day, and we readily believed it ; there was nothing to the contrary about or around us. The hours of that day flew by like a dream, to be indelibly written on our memories. Though it was Lucy's birthday, we had no other company ; nor do I think she wished it. I had had a ring made to fit her finger, which was just the size of mine,—a hair ring with two clasping hands, and engraved inside with my name. I put it upon her hand when we came downstairs, after she had changed her dress. While Francisco held that unresisting hand, I belted the finger with the golden symbol of a love so pure and true, that not the gravest test could destroy it hereafter. Francisco was leaving us for Paris ; he was taking a deeper insight into his profession than was usual in preparing for the army in those days ; but he said that he had peculiar incentives so to do ; and my father did not object to the *expenditure of money*, the which was keeping Francisco a *little longer in Europe*. Therefore, his education was to be

completed at one of the academies of Paris; and what lay beyond, we had not yet ventured to look upon.

Francisco and I had long conversations during that stay; and I imbibed in deep draughts of exciting knowledge the burden of his mingling with the world,—that world of which I knew nothing! For would it be believed? I was now eighteen, yet had scarcely left my native village. I never had been to London,—its wonders were all to come. I never had seen the sea,—its grandeur was stored for the future; nor had I mixed in any society but such as our country life afforded. Yet did I think myself well informed; well educated I certainly was; and the books I had ever industriously perused had given me some insight into conduct. Miss Davies had been a most inestimable friend, more efficient than Mrs. Barton; for Miss Davies knew me, and appreciated me, truly recognizing my faults; while to dear Mrs. Barton I was ever the young girl whose friendship had delighted her Lillie; whose love had shed a charm over her sisterless daughter, enhancing other blessings; who had estimated that daughter so highly while she lived, and so passionately lamented her death. Mrs. Barton regarded me with too partial eyes for her thoroughly to befriend me; and I never at any time talked very deeply with papa. We lived in unruffled affection, and I am sure he dreaded to disturb the calm, till his destiny compelled it. And when it *was* ruffled, never more to roll on as of old, the boat that glides on the summer sea, not more suddenly capsizes, when the careless weight, so nicely disposed, to the one side fatally hangs, than did the suspicionless bark of my peace go down in the gurgling waters. But I must not trespass upon the secrets of a prophetic tale; it is to the facts as they fall that I must necessarily cling.

My brother's aspirations were unalterably fastened upon that foreign country whose copious arms had generously opened to receive and welcome his father, which was the soil of his mother's grave, and where her family dwelt. The difference of the language had rendered communication rather a difficult thing; for, removed entirely from its sound, Francisco, retaining its accent always, had lost facility in its *use*; and of all tongues the tongue of Castille suffers most *at the hands of teachers*: and so little was known by his

English relatives about his foreign ones, that, as if by tacit consent of all parties, little tidings passed between them.

I afterwards learned it had been understood that he would return there on entering upon his property, which partly lay, in various ways, in that country; in the interim, brief letters only were exchanged between himself and his family.

But their epistles, if few and far between, were warm and tender when they came, and glowing with the poetry of the south; and his, no doubt, were such as satisfied them, for his heart remained true and loyal to the remembrances of his childhood. How passionate was his love for that romantic land! How ardently he longed to revisit it! Yet with this ambition, its towering resolves, and his thirst to be again among his mother's people, he did not undervalue the fidelity of those who had watched over his youth, he looked upon England as a second home, a second but a foster country. Strange heart—the heart of the heir of the Camerons, to choose rather his mother's nation, when the matron arms of the island realm would so proudly have enfolded him; when the race that bore a name for generations required a representative now, and the sole male scion of the house preferred De la Vega unto Cameron. But we used no arguments to undermine that choice. Contented to have him as he was, we did not span his future; and we had cause to rely upon his conduct, for we never heard a complaint against or a reflection upon him, notwithstanding his impressible and impetuous temperament, from any college or tutor.

Before he started for Paris, Francisco thought proper to make a formal proposal to Mr. Raymond for the hand of his youthful daughter. Papa was amused; he considered it a boy and girl attachment; not so the Raymonds. They were excellent people, who were choice of their daughter's happiness; and though they declined to accept his suit while Francisco was yet thus young, yet they accompanied their declination with the utmost kindness, and the most gratifying expressions towards himself; and Francisco regarded Lucy already as his bride.

*The harvest sun glanced down upon their vows—the beautiful! the innocent, the young! No shadow rested on*



the silvery face of the crescent or the maiden ! I saw the last embrace with which the arms of his strength and his love bound fast to his throbbing heart the drooping betrothed, so fair and pale in her loveliness and her purity. I received her fondly in my pitying arms, when time had ridden a race with sorrow, and would be stayed no longer ; and he must tear himself away. He gave me a trust, with his solemn eyes, lustrous and humid, searching mine. " Mary ! guard her, for she is mine ! " and I said, " Dearest, *I will.*"

We heard the tramp of their horses, we saw his departing figure ; and she wept hopelessly on my bosom. This was her birth to grief !

Sweet, lovely Lucy ! as you lay there in your artless and infantine weakness, bowed down at the last, from the steadfast serenity which was a part of your nature,—when, awoke from the trance of your holy joy, you felt that you were widowed ! who would have dreamed your angel face would shipwreck peace of mine hereafter ! Oh ! what a lovely face she had—like Carlo Dolce's virgins. Who could have dreamed that guileless heart, where Francisco lay like a bridegroom, would come a creature of fabled power on the pathway of my life ? And I, who looked with a sister's pride and a mother's protecting care on the sweet charge bequeathed to me by the lips of the beloved, how should my veiled sight discover that her heel was rending my heart-strings ! She wept on, the tears that did not refresh, and refused, with the bitterness of first grief, that I should comfort her. But she was contented to keep the place to which he had consigned her, and so we spent that sorrowful day as best we might.

## CHAPTER X.

They placed a banner in the ready hand,  
 On which inscribed he read,—  
 “A new affection!—Other love as pure  
 As that which starr’d thy boyhood!”  
 And from beneath his feet they swept  
 All memories of the past,  
 And he strode on resistlessly.

At this time my father grew restless. I could not tell cause; he appeared desirous rather to avoid me than to enter into conversation. He had no reserves from me on any subject; I knew all our family concerns, and nothing had escaped him, that I was aware of, to distract his complacency. He visited more than usual my much-loved cottagers during autumn. I knew each of their children intimately, the gamekeeper’s little daughter, who was a good child, and hoped one day to get a lady’s-maid’s situation, like sister Mary, to Johnny Barker, the poor little boy who was afflicted with a spinal disease, for whose benefit charitable friends gave money, that the best medical science should be exercised in his malady; but all without success; and the father and mother, with their large family, were, perhaps, the most industrious, but also the poorest people, in the precincts of Lynwood Hall; and who came in for my share of my attention in consequence, for I loved the afflicted boy.

It had been our delight, while Lillie lived, to stimulate school in which we taught, by offering prizes of trifling value, to encourage the children’s progress; and I had been at pains to procure service for many of the girls. Now that Lillie had left me, I was more than careful about these things, that I might in part supply her place in the village, and among the people whom she

*! Bessy Bower had gone to her rest. It was my habit to visit her grave when I visited the others that were dear*

to me. The violets and snowdrops succeeded each other on my mother's grave, as in other years, and I was careful no damp should deface her monument. The righting of that was a work which I always superintended myself. And the grass was green upon Lillie's now, for she had lain there three-quarters of a year, and that, too, was a fruitful soil, bearing many flowers.

I thought I saw a peculiar expression upon Mrs. Green's face, as I sat down in the porch of her house, after one of my walks to the church. I inquired if her children were all well, and if John ailed anything? She thanked me, "her girls were purely, and John had got shut of his rheumatis since he had the flannel shirts."

I tried again, for I noticed an increasing shade. "Was she weakly herself? Would she like a bottle of wine? Could I do anything for her?" I was amazed to see Mrs. Green turn her back, and fairly begin to sob.

Now, very much grieved, I followed her into the house, and begged her to tell me her trouble. It was several minutes before she had at all composed herself. Then she said, "Oh! Miss Cameron, you must excuse a poor woman; but I, that have carried you in my arms, and nursed the dear missis, sitting up with her, poor dear, her last night on this earth; and now to see the like o' this."

"And what is it, Mrs. Green," I repeated, "that distresses you? I really cannot imagine."

"La, ma'am, it isn't for the like o' me to be talking so to a young lady"—Mrs. Green was now aroused;—"but folks does say, it's a pity o' the master, and you so unkid still after your mamma's grave."

"I don't understand you," I replied.

"Why, Miss Cameron, isn't your papa to be married, dear?"

"Papa! papa to be married!"

I replied not a syllable to the running commentary, affection, concern, curiosity, and interest, which poor Mrs. Green poured on my ear. An interval went by, and I found myself at home. I turned into the house, intending to go at once to my room. I must think!—I must breathe! Supposing *that this should be true!* "And why should it not be true?" I

asked. "Other men in their prime have been widowed, and a merciful Providence has filled up the broken link."

And was human kindness a name, that thus my heart should be paralyzed, because my father, my dearest father, had a scheme of personal happiness?

I was crossing the hall to the foot of the staircase, when the door of the library opened, and Edward Raymond came out. He looked flushed and anxious. "I have been watching for you, Mary," he said.

"Indeed!" I said, not well pleased with the interruption; "but you don't want me downstairs, Edward?"

"I do, dear; yes, I particularly want you; don't go away just now. I have something to say to you; we will walk in the garden. Nay! don't look so surprised; is it so very surprising, Mary, that your accepted lover, your husband that is to be, should crave an audience this sweet day with his sweet and fair liege lady?"

He spoke half playfully, but his lips were trembling: he was very much agitated. I, on my part, was wonderfully moved by the tone of his address. I was quite accustomed to Edward Raymond's love; but I had not advanced any farther. I said rather pettishly, "There is nothing surprising to me that happens in this world; but whatever you wish, please to tell it quickly, for I am in no mood to trifle."

"Nor am I, my beautiful love," was his startling and instant answer, with a voice and manner far more imperative than I had known in him before.

I was fairly lost in amazement, and had to submit to wait.

"There is something surprising to me in this world, dear Mary," he said, at length more calmly, "and that something I am commissioned to tell you; but how to frame it, lest I vex you, or whether already you guess its existence, I know not."

I was listening now with closed eyes, and he went on:—

"Mr. Cameron, your father has deputed me to tell you that he—he would rather not name it to you first himself."

"What is it my father cannot announce to his daughter, and which he is compelled to employ a third person to break to her?" I burst out in anger.

"Be patient, dear, and do not blame him ; indeed, that I know you could not do ; but I cannot measure your feelings—my own are so full of joy."

"To what does this tend ?" I asked, rising abruptly and turning imperiously upon him.

"My dearest Mary, it means that Mr. Cameron is going to be married."

I stood quite still, staring at Edward. I saw the whole at a glance : my home was dissolved—my mother's home, which should know her spirit no more ! My father's fondness would pass to a stranger, and I should no longer be mistress here. And whither should I go ? When should all these things come to pass ?

My lover stayed patiently ; and not till I saw my selfishness in its just and proper light ; not till I had weighed papa's precious happiness with the abnegation of my rights ; not till I had drawn a gasping breath, which took a little of sentiment away, and instilled a more Christian spirit, with the remembrance of my mother's dying words ; not until Edward, interpreting that sigh, had taken my burning hand, did I see the end to which all this led in my individual interest.

Then the knowledge of that came distinctly, too, and I did not need his words. I knew that papa had bidden him that day take home the wife of his betrothal. I looked no more upon his beautiful face, scarcely upon his hand ; there came a rush of mingled feelings—upon the depths of my being a mysterious awe, a shivering dread, all—anything but bliss ; while from his eager lips sprang forth the ready tale, the mistakeless joy of the tumultuous manly pride. He pleaded that our marriage might be soon.

"We have loved each other many years, dear Mary—at least, I have loved *you* many years, and I have understood you, happily a long time past. Why, then, shall we not marry now, and your love be spared the transient pang of receiving your father's new bride ? Let me aid you to welcome her to a home of your own, where there can be nothing but happiness, my Mary !"

I know not what I said. I uttered some reply, lost in all the bearings of such vast things and new, suddenly placed before me. I could not have consented to an immediate

marriage, if I had understood what he desired of me. Alas, alas, I was weeping at soul! I could not endure the shock. The templed sanctuary, where a mother's presence had perpetually environed her only child—and another should enter there!

But my lover was content—he asked no more; he bent over the hand he clasped, and presently he began reproaching himself for neglecting to care for me—"I had been standing so long;" and he discovered that I looked white—I had long felt myself so, though an August sun was above us; and he led me tenderly into the house, as men only lead *their own*, and removed my bonnet from my aching head, and the shawl from about my shoulders, and placed me at ease—a bodily ease—on the couch by the open window, and I looked out of it, gazing on vacancy. I saw not him, though I felt his care; and he brought me wine, which I mechanically drank, and fell into a long wild dream.

I heard again my mother's words, charging me with papa's happiness. I remembered the joyousness of his life with her—the gloom that followed after. I recalled his constant affection towards me, his reluctance to part with me. I considered how Lillie would have bidden me take up this cross and bear it. Then I rushed away to Paris, where Francisco was. I wanted him—I wanted him! I wanted to lay my head on his breast, and ask him, and tell him all; I had no other friend but him, who belonged to the depths of my nature. His powerful spirit matched with mine—he only could control me. I uttered a gasping cry of pain, a longing after the boy, whose treasure I should preserve for him, and who in my trouble was far away, whom I could neither seek nor summon.

Edward was full of grief. My manner was very strange—even he must have thought it so—and when that wail burst from my lips, and he attempted to comfort me, I first remembered that in all my retrospect and wandering he had not been. He could have no portion in my sorrow, for he was incapable of comprehending it. My heart was desolate with my lover by, and clasping *his* hand, I was yearning for my brother. Oh, *that* should not have been! The side of *the question* where he was bound up had faded out of my mind. But I rose at length, myself again, Miss Cameron

Lynwood Hall,—ashamed of my weakness, awake to reality, alive to my requirements.

I spoke a few words to him, which I thought he did not understand, about speaking with my father; and I said I supposed I should meet him at dinner, and that I should then have recovered myself, and would wish an explanation with him.

I ran up to my room and put up my hair, and had myself dressed, sedulously banishing all traces of emotion from my face. Then I opened the door of my mother's chamber, unoccupied since her death, and I entered and sat down. I beheld the bed where last she lay, and on which the moon-beam fell, when, cold and lonely, an orphan child, I saw her in her coffin; and sitting there, I framed a vow, born of my love for her, that not only would I meet my father's marriage, but I would aid its fulfilment, if once assured that she whom he had chosen were worthy to be his wife. I bowed my head; I knelt; I registered that vow in heaven. I allowed myself not a moment more; I passed out of the chamber, locking the door. Like the seal of the bond upon my soul, the sound of the bolt fell.

I went down stairs; I entered the library; I walked straight up to papa. He was discomposed. He looked afraid of me; he had no need. He held out his arms; I nestled up to his heart, as I did when a little child. No need once more for words; we understood each other. We were altogether silent, until the door was opened and dinner announced; and it flashed upon me that Edward would be waiting the redemption of my implied promise, that I should wish an explanation with him.

Papa held me from him as I rose, and looked at me fondly; then he said, "Is it all right, my child?"

"Oh yes, papa, it is all right," I said; his question, and my answer, to each irrelevant. He thought of me, I only of him; and so we misunderstood each other.

He gave me his arm, and we went to the dining-room. Edward was there. It was a quiet dinner, for we were each indisposed to talk. When dinner was removed, and the *servants had gone*, and the door was closed upon us, I grew *uneasy*; I was afraid papa would speak of our engagement,

and I knew of no limit I could put upon his words, and my thoughts of myself were a chaos.

But papa did not enter upon any particular subject, and very soon left us alone.

Then we sat together in the familiar room, myself at the head of the table—the seat I must soon resign, and I did not wish our silence broken. I dreaded what my lover might say. But this must not be. I told Edward that I had been sitting with papa, but that we had had no conversation; and I suddenly remembered, that doubtless Edward could tell me many particulars about papa's engagement. I had not been told, for I had never asked, the *name* of my father's betrothed. So here was a conversation rite with interest fortunately provided, to spare me other subjects, which, as yet, I could not encounter.

The lady was the daughter of Mr. Marston d'Eyncourt, who represented the West Riding of Yorkshire—his eldest daughter, by a former marriage; a lady possessed of no fortune, but described by papa as a most amiable woman, of sterling qualities; unfortunately, not in the enjoyment of good health. It was trusted a more southerly residence would tend to improve that. Papa met this lady at the house of a mutual friend, at a distance from our neighbourhood. This was some short time ago, and circumstances which had recently transpired had led him to decide upon offering her his hand. I recollected these circumstances, and the way in which they brought about this event, which was now definitely arranged to take place at no distant time, my father's anxiety and care for me alone remaining to retard it.

"And this anxiety and care now removed," Edward said, "by our approaching marriage, there is nothing to be done by each of us but prepare our respective establishments."

I permitted him to proceed; one startling allusion rapidly succeeding another, I was incapable of stemming the torrent. I felt the waters closing around me—I told my lover that my concerns must be indefinite, till I had had an explanation with papa; and I shared the desultory conversation that followed as we strolled through the garden and meadows; and after tea, though it was growing late,



to indulge me, we took a drive. I liked a late drive at that season. And so the day died out to the morrow which was at hand—the weighty morrow which appeared to engulf my fate. Such irrational conclusions we draw at the age of eighteen!

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## CHAPTER XI.

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,  
Golden tresses wreathed in one,  
As the braided streamlets run!  
Standing with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

LONGFELLOW.

WE had a thorough explanation—dearest papa and myself—of everything that concerned his affairs; he hid nothing from me, save the strength I *saw* in his new-found love. He led me to regard as an elder sister, rather than a new and exalted mother, the gentle woman he loved. And, satisfied in my only doubt, I lent myself cordially with unfaltering resolution, at which myself often pondered wonderingly, to further his wishes.

We had workpeople in the house to renew those old rooms, and change the ancient furnishings—they did not become a bridal. The grounds alone were left untouched, until her taste should dispose them. I had begged papa to put away all thoughts but such as belonged strictly to himself, leaving for the time his daughter's wedding as an event that would follow after.

I received the warm kindnesses of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond, who gladly welcomed me for their daughter; and Lucy wound her arms round my neck, that was all I required from her; while congratulations were showered upon me by our surrounding and respective acquaintances; for, together with the news of my father's intended marriage had spread the tidings of mine; my engagement had not previously *been understood*; we had been intimate with the Raymonds for years, which left nothing strange in our exchange

of visits now. Edward had taken a residence not too far from Lynwood, which was being decorated with great care to suit my somewhat expensive tastes. My tastes! who was buried in that primitive simplicity, who had only heard of grandeur, and to whom fashion was a name. With a placid brow, but a beating heart, I saw papa go away, when his return was not again to be alone. The servants touched me with their anxious looks; but I amazed them by my conduct, and their perplexity was great.

It was just at the time of the marriage that Edward brought his mother to see me. She was most indulgent in her manner towards me, and I delighted to receive her; but I could not comprehend a certain embarrassment I detected about her air. When presently we were left alone, she began to speak to me hurriedly.

"My dear," she said, "I have not done wrong, I believe, in coming to consult you. We love you much, and we respect you also. I need scarcely say that my child, under existing circumstances—and an event, that is, some unpleasant information which has reached us—has caused Mr. Raymond some anxiety; for, although we did not positively recognize your cousin's proposal to Lucy, we made the reservation only on account of their youth, and of course we are aware of their correspondence, and that they regard it themselves as an engagement."

What did this portend?

"We thought it best," continued Mrs. Raymond, "to come to head-quarters at once, as doubtless you are acquainted with the facts; and in our present dilemma we would willingly spare the feelings of our child. Although she is only at an age when many are in the schoolroom, an only daughter is often precocious, sometimes sadly precocious; we could almost regret that our dear Lucy should be more than a child."

"I am extremely anxious," I interposed, "to learn what it is that has annoyed you."

"To come to the point, my dear (surely you are yourself aware?) we have had a letter from acquaintances of ours who are living in Paris, and they say Francisco's debts are enormous!"

I exclaimed, "*Francisco's debts enormous!* I do not

believe a word of it ; it is a slander invented by ignorant persons who do not know what they say."

"I fear, my dear, it is more than that ; I fear we must believe it. Unfortunately, there is startling proof that it cannot be a slander."

"May I ask exactly what you have heard, my dear Mrs. Raymond ?" I steadied myself to say.

She then told me their acquaintances the Montrillos knew Francisco in Paris ; indeed, being his country people, they were on intimate terms with him, and they had been aware for some time that his liabilities were large ; but only recently Mr. Montrillo had been requested by Francisco to oblige him with a loan by which they might in part be liquidated ; they (being ignorant of any private interest we have in the young man) simply mention, among other subjects, their regret that a member of a family of our friends should be so situated ; and, indeed, it is requested that yourselves may not be informed of Francisco's gambling propensities, so unthankful an office is it to bear evil tidings."

"Slanderers !" I cried. "Believe me, Mrs. Raymond, Francisco is incapable of the conduct attributed to him. Into the horrors of play he may possibly have been enticed—he *may*, though I think not. But Francisco Cameron would never ask another man for money when his own fortune can be reached, and while he has no harsher guardian than papa !"

All the lion was roused within me. I had read of dastard schemes which destroy at a blow the hopes of years, and shipwreck happiness, and I felt that this was one of them, and that I might be powerless to reveal it.

"Besides, Francisco would have written to me ! Could he not have trusted his sister ?"

"My dear, young men of that age do not often confer with sisters !"

I felt highly indignant ; I thought this was too much. Not content with bringing me a story which, to say the least, was very offensive, Mrs. Raymond issued an unqualified opinion upon my brother's intercourse with me. There was nothing of which I was so proud as the high place which *I knew I held* in Francisco's mind. It was his respect for *me which I treasured* almost more than his affection. }

spoke haughtily. "My cousin's honour," I said, "was at stake ; but it did not become me to defend that which was unimpeachable."

"Pshaw, my child !" said Mrs. Raymond ; "you must remember how young he is."

"Young he is, madam ; but sufficiently old to respect himself."

"You consider your cousin very highly, upon my word, Miss Cameron !"

"I consider him one, than whom I hold no man higher."

I spoke with passion unbecoming my position to her whom I addressed, and I did not observe the particular tone our angry conversation was assuming. What more I should have said, or she replied, I cannot guess, had not Edward re-entered the room ; and his presence, more than anything else could have done, recalled us to ourselves. But the seed of dissension had taken root, and had I invisibly accompanied them home, especially had I followed Mrs. Raymond to her husband's dressing-room—had I heard my name upon her lips in the exaggeration of wrath—I should have learned, doubtless, what it did not take long as it was to teach me, that from the respect and esteem of the Raymonds their son's affianced had irretrievably fallen.

My haughty declarations and passionate outbursts had impressed Mrs. Raymond, who ought to have scouted the idea, that the solemn love which had belonged to Francisco, since he came as a brother to my home, was another feeling which fatally clashed with the peace of both her children. How could she conceive the thought ! Wild tongue ! wild tongue ! how couldst thou give it birth ?

The evening brought my lover in great distress. This misunderstanding was intolerable to him. I had spent the day in mingled grief and rage ; I had posted off a letter to Francisco ; I had wandered through the house in a wretched manner ; not a moment had I been able to rest. Surrounding sights had been hateful to me, for my evil spirit had been uppermost. Edward had mounted his horse, and had ridden over to me to effect a reconciliation.

Not that I supposed an actual quarrel had occurred between myself and Mrs. Raymond, still I could imagine that at Brockley Priory the star of the Camerons was in

the descendant. Edward eagerly inquired of me what had taken place in his absence. I gave a strict account of the proceedings. I think I detailed more than was necessary of my own improper bearing; rather entertained than not, that he should evince so much regret that I had annoyed his lady-mother.

He was very much afflicted, and I begged in my turn to hear from him the particulars of the Montrillos' letter. I learned no more than I knew previously from Mrs. Raymond. I felt very unhappy; and Edward I am sure was wretched.

I proposed to order lights, for it was a winter's evening, the end of December, later in the season of the year than that when Lillie died. But she might almost have lain at that open window, so vividly I recalled her making her last adieux. I suddenly thought of Cranston Barton, to whom I was much attached. It was our habit to exchange letters casually, or as the case might be. We had certainly fulfilled the agreement we had entered upon with Lillie, for we felt a hearty sympathy in all the concerns of each other.

"I will write to Cranston!" I exclaimed aloud, "and he shall go to Paris!"

"Wherefore, my dearest?" Edward inquired in his gentlest possible tone.

My heart gave great heaves to and fro in its place, like some caged thing.

"Wherefore! know you not that my brother's honour and reputation are dearer to me than my life! and that rather than I would have him slandered, I would sacrifice every creature in the world! Cranston Barton shall travel to Paris as fleet as my will can bear him, and we will await his return, Mr. Edward Raymond, ere disgrace shall rest on the name of Cameron!"

No description can embody the indignation and scorn which my tone and words must have carried.

"Mary! Mary!" I heard him say.

My heart, which was so proud in the cause of the absent beloved, misgave me, notwithstanding my fierceness, when my lover was pained. But I could not *speak* the effort of my better nature.

*I silently waited, in presence of the first quick pang which*

myself had caused to Edward. And he presently looked up more calm in the moonlight which now streamed on his face.

Taking my hand he said, hurriedly, "What is it all about, Mary, that makes us so unhappy? I cannot understand it! First, my mother (who thinks there is no one to compare with you) comes here, and you two do not agree; and as if that was not sufficient for one wretched day, here am I destroying your peace!"

"My peace!" I exclaimed, "great peace for me in existing circumstances. When I shall taste peace again I do not know."

"Peace!" I went on to say, "is a blessed thing."

But his goodness in the end accomplished his purpose, and I thought him almost divine, so patiently he bore with my petulant torturing. So perseveringly he combated my wrath, till peace *was* restored between *us*; and when he bent down to give me his parting kiss, while his horse was brought round to the door, I felt how unworthy! how utterly unworthy I must ever be of him!

To Cranston Barton I wrote before I slept, a brief note with the particulars I possessed, and strict injunctions, and I bade him "Fly! for life and love hung on his steps."

I sealed the letter, and felt that a great weight was removed from me by the writing of that letter. It must lie still until the following day—that was a misfortune, and, in the mean time, sleep! I must try to sleep in this home, which never felt so desolate before. I trod the fresh velvet pile disdainfully. The light of a new chandelier half blinded me as I passed through the hall; but I fell asleep some time after the wee hours came round, and my waking thought was a great thankfulness that Lucy was ignorant of the storm. I got up, feeling greatly relieved, for sleep had refreshed me. Doubtless this vexation would pass away, and serenity, with regard to Francisco at all events, return. Yet a doubt would find an entrance.

That morning I heard from papa. They were on the Continent, where he had carried his new treasure, I thought imprudently, suffering her to inhale the more genial atmosphere of a warmer latitude, when she must return to *England during the severe winter with us*. My stepmother *went me the kindest messages*. She greatly desired to see

me, and was anticipating her arrival at her future home, thus early in their bridal tour. "I wish they had gone to Paris!" I thought; but the next moment I considered it was as well they had not.

I despatched my letter—I wrote to papa—I transacted various businesses. Altogether I was more at ease. I put on my bonnet, and walked to the Vicarage;—I told my grievance to dear Mrs. Barton: she sympathized heartily.

"Be assured, my dear," she said, "all will right itself; the course of true love never did run smooth. How can we expect that it should do so when so much grace, and riches, and promise are linked hand in hand? And," Mrs. Barton more seriously continued, "in this world grief and joy are generally mingled; we must taste the grief before we can appreciate the joy."

I remained at the Vicarage for dinner, where Edward shortly afterwards joined me, looking ill at ease. He could not rest while we stayed at the Vicarage; therefore I took leave of the Bartons, and we walked back to the Hall. I was excessively annoyed at Edward's intelligence, which, however, he did not yield up graciously. I had to ask questions, a course which I detested. Mr. and Mrs. Raymond had been speaking with Lucy upon the subject of the Montrillos' letter. They had also written to the Montrillos, and they had *not* written to Francisco.

I was enraged. What had Lucy expressed—what had she not *felt* at this charge? Edward told me very little either of the one or the other.

"Edward! *you* might have written to *your* friend—*my* cousin—and your sister's affianced husband!"

Edward shook his head in a manner that I did not understand.

"What, then, is the aspect of the affair?" I inquired.

"The aspect of the affair is that my father and mother saw a good deal of the Montrillos in London in the spring; and they say they cannot disbelieve a statement which comes upon their authority; and, dear Mary, there is nothing to oppose to it!"

"Nothing to oppose to it! And what is there to prove it?"

"*Their word.*"

"*Their bare word!*"

"You forget, dear, they are our friends!"

"I forget everything but that Francisco is traduced. I suspect they have a tall daughter who has fixed her large eyes on Francisco de la Vega, of sufficiently high rank in their country; and forgetting that he is a Cameron and cannot be traduced with impunity, this scheme is hit upon to put an end to his engagements elsewhere. I will never believe but that the Monrillos are aware how nearly interested in this your parents are, or they would not have been so particular to announce a discredit, and entreat that it be not divulged to his family. But when next acquaintances or *friends* have any accusations to advance against my cousin, I hope they will make them in the proper place, and to the proper persons to refute them. How dare they send such dastard tales into the home of the young girl he is to marry? It is frightful wickedness!"

This discordance was strangely at variance with the tenour of my past intercourse with Edward. Up to this period our placidity had been undisturbed, ruffled only by my agitation when first my father's marriage was spoken of. My temper was wayward in the extreme, but Edward never suffered by it. I was too much attached to him, by the usage of years, and his excellences and devotion, to tyrannize over him. Now, however, the case was different. I was most uncomfortable in this business of Francisco's, and I was painfully sensible how little actual sympathy could exist between myself and Edward, although my feelings were what I describe.

I received the next day a few lines from Cranston Barton: with pleasure he should set out on my behest. I might rely upon that; but he could not leave Cambridge on the instant. He craved my forbearance—some collegiate engagements, which could not be superseded, would detain him some days.

I chafed at the delay, evidently unavoidable.



## CHAPTER XII.

Visions of childhood ! stay, oh stay !  
 Ye were so sweet and wild.  
 And distant voices seem'd to say,  
 "It cannot be ! they pass away !  
 Other themes demand thy lay ;  
 Thou art no more a child !"

LONGFELLOW.

EDWARD and I walked or rode about the village and neighbourhood, sufficiently like lovers to delight the simple taggers. They were very much pleased with my engagements. Never was any young man, I believe, more beloved by dependents than Edward Raymond.

Edward told me meanwhile nothing at all about Lucy. He persisted only that she was quite well ; and that never now had any conversation with her. I frequently inquired why she did not ride over with Edward to see me. I never had any satisfactory answer.

At the end of a week, I demanded of Edward if a second letter had arrived from the Montrillos, although I knew it was highly improbable there could have been time for that, but this dearth of tidings was intolerable. To my surprise Mrs. Raymond *had* received a second letter. "The Montrillos must be very much interested indeed in the termination of this affair," I said.

To which I received no reply.

"I shall myself call upon Lucy !" I announced. Edward appeared perplexed.

"Your mother cannot forgive me, I presume," I observed sarcastically ; "and you fear a continuation of our little pleasantries ; but I assure you I wish only to see Lucy. And Lucy I wish to see ; I have a duty to perform to her."

As I said this I glanced towards Edward, and I thought *him so unnecessarily agitated*, that I was alarmed, *begged to know* what had occurred to cause him to be so

"Perhaps Mrs. Raymond would not desire to see me," I said in a grave tone ; "is that what your manner infers?"

He said, "Mary, my mother makes herself unhappy, because she thinks my father and herself encouraged Lucy's attachment, which has brought about this trouble. But she *must* exonerate you from blame."

This was quite a new light ; Edward actually felt that only on account of his engagement with his sister was Francisco's conduct to be deplored, admitting the truth of the accusation ; and his mother would kindly exonerate me from the blame of defending my cousin's conduct, when I had undergone a necessary period of probation.

I would not quarrel with Edward, nor argue, since that would have no effect ; but that day, after he left me, I first seriously asked myself if I ought to marry Edward Raymond. Days rolled on ; I heard from papa again, but I did not hear from Cranston ; neither did I hear from Francisco himself.

I felt a burning curiosity to know the contents of the Montrillos' second letter ; but Edward never informed me. I was too proud to allude to it again, and there was nothing for it all but to wait—wait. More time went by in that torturing suspense, till I began to think it would never end ; and Edward did not enter into my anxieties, although he visited me almost daily,—I said "religiously." It was quite a new phase, and one which I liked not, that I never saw Lucy. This suspension of our visits, offensive to me in the position I held to the family, was doubly so as regarded her relationship with Francisco. I wanted to see the constancy of the soul of my brother's betrothed ; I longed to talk with Lucy.

And now I felt that Edward had knowledge which he did not share with me ; he knew a thing which I wanted to know, and he withheld it from me. I forgot how he might be labouring to restore the lost tranquillity, and that doubtless he feared to anger me by the repetition of a single word he heard in his home. I forgot all that.

But I was consumed with feverish anxiety. "Oh ! Francisco, my darling ! you cannot have so destroyed me ;" *for the more I thought of that gambling story, the more shocking it became. It involved inroads upon those favourite*

studies, on which his whole mind had been set ; it must swallow up the energies, hitherto fixed upon his academical dispositions. The temptation must indeed be subtle, if it had achieved these conquests. (I was not very learned then in worldly knowledge.) But I cast it from me, the villanous imputation ! yet why this extraordinary silence !

I was ill in body and spent in mind, when I got a letter from my father. The travellers were returning the beginning of the following week ;—Mrs. Cameron (how strangely it sounded) was impatient to reach home. I had heard absolutely nothing, when my father brought home the bride.

I was decidedly pleased with Mrs. Cameron. She was a highly-educated woman, and had mixed in the best circles ; and her bearing towards myself was singularly prepossessing.

She was delighted with her residence ; and the very first day, the sun shining at noon, she insisted upon venturing, though it was February, upon an inspection of the out-door capabilities in which she was to exercise her taste. We walked out together, she warmly wrapt, and looking very delicate, and I found it pleasant to have a lady companion along those walks again. I spoke to her of Lillie, and other interests which affected me in a less degree, and she touched upon my engagement. But there I shut her out : I could not permit her to approach my secret chamber. She was wise, and forbore ; but she looked wonderingly and inquiringly at me. We quickly returned to the house, and sitting by a large fire in the dining-room, she told me papa had some annoying business which he thought it right I should know. How remarkable to be told my father's business by any person but himself !

But it was what it would have pained him to enter upon—the old mysterious subject,—with, however, a light thrown on it.

“ Mr. Raymond had addressed my father ” (I remembered Edward asking papa's address—Edward had plotted against me !) “ upon the subject of my cousin's misconduct,” so said Mrs. Cameron, and the communication was of so grave a character, that papa had thought proper to write to the banker in Paris, upon whom Francisco's money orders were drawn, *asking him, as a friend, to give his attention in the matter ; to which letter, however, there had been no reply.* Mrs.

Cameron went on to say that papa felt assured some foundation existed for a report which had reached so alarming a height that young Cameron did not show himself in society ; thereby sealing the report.

"It is sad, dear," continued Mrs. Cameron, "but the temptations of cities are more seductive than we can expect a young man to pass through unimpeachably." *She*, then, condemned Francisco, while my father's confidence, I could not doubt, was shaken.

That moment a wall sprang up—a stone wall—upon the carpet where we two sat : it shot up right between us. If I had been beside papa when he heard this of Francisco, would he have given credence to it ? would not my voice have scoffed away the thought ere it lived ? But it would not have lived. Papa to doubt Francisco ! it was monstrous ! I could not look up again ; I could talk no more to the lady who embroidered unheedingly at my side. She was a stranger ! she knew not Francisco ! she could not make our peace ! Oh ! why did papa bring an alien to be one of us ?

A servant entered the room with the letter-bag. It had generally been first brought to me,—that was the case this day. I sprang from my seat, and unlocked the bag with hasty, trembling hands. There were three letters only—two for me, one for papa ; but all must relate to Francisco. I rushed from the room, oblivious of the existence of Mrs. Cameron. Breathlessly I reached my father's side. "Papa !" I tore open mine—one from Francisco—no—both from Cranston Barton. How, his address then ? no matter :—

"HOTEL DE LOUVRE, 18th Feb.

"DEAR MARY,—Our invalid is recovering, and I doubt not soon to rejoice you with the tidings of his convalescence ; for, after all, the wound was slight. Mental anxiety and agitation had more to do with bringing on this attack than anything else. I will not allow him to talk. I will write shortly—and rest assured all will be well—I am convinced of it ; but until he can explain, I have no information whatever, except what I gave you in my last. In haste, dear Mary,

"Yours sincerely,

"CRANSTON BARTON."

*I ran through that—I tore open the other.*

"HOTEL DE LOUVRE, 15th Feb.

"DEAR MARY,—To go at once into my subject—I found at Francisco's rooms, that your cousin had not been there for a week. I could hear nothing of him at the academy where he studies ; therefore, my only resource was the Montrillos, to whom I drove at once. I saw the Señora Montrillo. From her I learned that Francisco was staying at the Hôtel de Louvre. She appeared eagerly desirous to prolong the interview, but I was equally anxious to terminate it. I found your cousin in bed here with a gun-shot wound, which I am informed he got in a duel with a young French officer ; and as no friend is with him, no servant, and that is all the doctor knows (he was brought to the hotel immediately after the affair by a gentleman who comes here to visit him, but he declines to give me any information), I can tell you nothing but what will, I fear, cause you great uneasiness. But I hope all will go well, though I will not conceal from you that I find him very ill. I shall write you in a couple of days ; in the mean time believe me,—Yours sincerely,

"CRANSTON BARTON."

"Papa, let me see your letter."

"PARIS, 18th Feb.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I had the pleasure to receive your letter, date the 10th inst. I have inquired respecting your relative, Mr. Francisco Cameron. I learn he is, at the moment I write, ill. He was wounded in *une petite affaire d'honneur*. I have not been informed the particulars ; but I shall receive intelligence, and will have the honour to write you again.

"With respect to the other subject named in your letter, no large sums have been presented for payment by our house.

"I am, my dear sir, your very obedient servant,

"SIMÉON S. DUMARÉ."

I laid down the letter. Papa had been reading mine.

"Well, papa !"

"Well, Mary !"

"Are you not indignant at it all ?"

"I feel very much so ; and I am seriously uneasy until the mystery is solved. I must say, my dear, that I cannot imagine a report of that kind being current for which there is no foundation."

"Papa, I have heard, the world will say anything ; but we have a right to expect better of our friends. How could Mr. and Mrs. Raymond admit the truth of a calumny for which they could really have no authority ?"

"It is very unfortunate—very unfortunate indeed, considering his engagement with Miss Raymond, which they evidently consider precluded, by what they say to me ; and of course I do not interfere."

"Precluded ! they wish to preclude their daughter's engagement with Francisco ? They are perfectly at liberty to reject the alliance—the Camerons do not sue."

But in an instant I felt the truth. What was pride in comparison with happiness ? yet the pride of both was excessive—as deep-seated as their love. I groaned in spirit.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

The vision and the voice are o'er !  
Their influence waned away,  
Like music o'er a summer lake,  
At the golden close of day.

SWAIN.

PEDRO DE MONTRILLO was of Spanish birth, his parents residents in South Peru. He married an amiable and dowered lady, and being wealthy himself, they kept an excellent establishment. Their house was well known upon the coast. At the time of their marriage they were staying in Lima, where a *furor* was then created by the marvellous beauty of a young southern lady, also Spanish by birth, whose family, residing in Chuquisaca, was well known to the Montrillos by name. Her parents were both of distinguished birth, and each was said to have fortune ; and this girl was their only child. She had been educated with great care, was highly accomplished, and had passed the last three years with her parents in travelling in Europe. Eloisa Catalina Garcia de la Vega had inherited the beauty of a beautiful race. In the cities of Europe she received the homage of *men of letters and courts*. Sovereigns were charmed by her *talent and grace*, and the world was at her feet. Yet when

Señor and Señora de la Vega returned to their transatlantic home, they bore back with them their daughter untouched of heart as unwon of hand. The wonderful galleries where mighty genius had garnered its mighty mind, making obscure names immortal while art and virtue live, *they* charmed her sight,—the melody of glorious music, which ravished arrested sense, as she passed through German and Italian churches, whose architecture vied with their pealing anthems in its effect upon her mind,—with these her soul was delighted; and there was that in the glorious landscapes of Italy, beside its song and its thrilling ordinances (to her as a Catholic), which went far to entrance her spirit. But among the human springs of life, the tongues of fire and the hearts of flame at work in those powerful realms, she encountered not her destiny. The brave and proud passed before her, she was insensible to their attraction; the courtly and admiring knelt at her feet, and she beheld not their devotion. She returned to Lima—gentle and fair Eloisa, and swift upon the steps of her home-coming the love-light came.

There was an assembly at the house of the President, the Señor Gonzales Ribero, whither flocked the tropic bloom and the wit of the *élite* of Lima—the chivalrous men and the brilliant women of that imperial city—and among them the Señorita Eloisa.

A young Englishman made his way through the crowd gathered round the beautiful Southron. The sensation of her arrival had not yet subsided. Every one was anxious to make her acquaintance on her recent return from Europe, and her introduction in her country. She stood composedly at her mother's side, with very slight pretension of manner. Her natural loftiness required no pride of bearing; smiling and self-possessed, wearing a robe of simple silk, with no flower or riband about it, amid the blaze of surrounding colour, and having no ornament upon her head, but, suspended round her throat a single diamond cross, she received with grateful pleasure the compliments of her people.

Later in the evening she joined in the dancing. She loved the dances of her native city. She moved with her partner *through their mazes with charming ease and elegance, "the observed of all observers."* Her partner was a stranger;

the society of Lima. Madame Ribero had presented him markedly to the De la Vegas as a particular friend of her own, and had honoured him by her own and her husband's especial attentions. Other people appeared to know no more of him than his name. This was the first meeting of the parents of Francisco, who were shortly afterwards married. Lima rang with the splendour of the bridal, which eclipsed all antecedent festivals in the richness and taste of its appointments—the *distingué* bearing of the bridegroom—the wealth and beauty of the bride. People who wondered that the haughty De la Vegas bestowed their heiress upon a stranger, forgot all that had before been mysterious, in the freedom with which his high honours sat upon him, and the fascination of his address to all the world. Never was person so admired, both by men and women, as was Mr. Reginald Cameron, in the circles of Lima. The De la Vegas' residence was besieged by numbers anxious to obtain a sight of the *trousseau*, as well as to offer congratulations. Nor were the poor forgotten amidst the general rejoicing; they were *fêted*, and their good wishes swelled the tide of the more exalted hopes with which this happy pair were favoured; and never did marriage promise joy more entirely fulfilled. Señor de Montrillo and his wife went back to live on their estates in the south, the De la Vegas sold theirs in that neighbourhood, and the Montrillos did not again meet Mr. Reginald Cameron or his beautiful Spanish wife. But when, very many years afterwards, they saw in the *salons* of Paris a young gentleman of noble bearing, whose face united two distinct remembrances, Pedro de Montrillo said to his wife, "We must know our young countryman!" And as the señora, with winning grace, invited him to her circles, she recognized the match of those glorious eyes, whose fame had been heard through Europe; she remembered the distinguished Englishman, Eloisa de la Vega's bridegroom, upon whose brow had been stamped the soul's nobility which she saw reflected here. She recollected the circumstances of his parents' deaths, and his own departure to England, and she knew he was one of the finest *partis* in Peru.

*Juana de Montrillo* had a thought of him that night, which quickly ripened to a plan, and bore prosperous fruit



hereafter. The expressions here used are somewhat singular, but I did not receive these particulars until my cousin Francisco repeated them to me in the presence of his wife, when I was myself a resident in Peru; and he then spoke generally the Castilian language, which I have had some difficulty to render into English, while retaining its original simplicity.

The marriage of the Señor and Señora de Montrillo had been blessed by one child,—a daughter; and scarcely blessed; for though good, and also beautiful, the girl had grown up of a remarkable temperament;—so her worldly mother thought. It had been the young girl's desire from her childhood to renounce the world; and it was now her darling wish to be permitted to enter the cloister, after which she had so long been yearning. This was a great grief to her parents, who were extremely fond of her, as well as being highly ambitious that she should make a brilliant marriage; for their pride of birth was excessive, and appeared to merge within it every other consideration.

Hoping to wean their daughter from this inauspicious taste, they had evaded the entreaties of their Jesuit acquaintances, who would fain have won the sole scion of the house of Montrillo to the arms of the Church and the exalted piety of the cloister. They had carried their daughter to Europe, in the hope that the freshness of foreign scenes, the beauties of art, and the charms of society, might deter her from her purpose; but hitherto all these things had been insufficient. The young Maria Lopez Concepciona appeared, it is true, in the assemblies of fashion; but it was as a lamb adorned for the sacrifice. The altars were pure and fair, but no fire burned in the glorious fane. Men said, "How beautiful the statue was!" and sighed that it wanted life. And sadder sank the mother's aspirations; she saw the veil about her daughter's brow, which was to sever her from all the world. The father's haughty hopes fell to the ground. Why had they left their home?—for rather there than here would they have resigned their child; and she, faint in the atmosphere of fashion, implored to enrol herself among the sisterhood of Père la Chaise.

*In Peru the same skies would glow above them, the same*

ea meet their separate gaze, the same rich air invi-  
them ; but with ocean dashing deep between, mocking  
1 with its sparkling foam—could they bear this ?  
er soft eyes implored ; and paler grew her cheek at  
egative ; and tears rolled over her face in one per-  
stream.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

thou carefully defined when thy boyhood ceased to be,  
he red sun of thy manhood rose in glory o'er the sea !  
thou tell when *love* first whisper'd low and softly at thine ear,  
ing all thy sense with rapture, and a faint delicious fear ?  
s world can no beginning, nor end of aught be shown ;—  
ings blend in one another ; only God can stand alone."

was a ball given by their majesties at the Tuileries,  
h all foreigners of distinction were invited. Thither,  
suite of the Peruvian ambassador, went the Mon-  
and their daughter ; and thither, with an English  
nan, went also Francisco Cameron. The Señora  
llo turned deadly pale, when she observed in the  
surrounding her majesty the young Englishman she  
olved to introduce to her daughter. She scrutinized  
ghter fixedly ; she desired to assure herself that no  
in those rooms bore any resemblance to her. Maria  
Concepciona was sixteen years old. She was, as usual,  
ight the perfection of sculptured beauty ; and as  
ther desired, no other there could be mistaken for

her was the robe of the Señorita de Montrillo to be  
ided with another. Although this was a gala night,  
esses looked like bridal dresses to the eyes of the  
an lady, her daughter wore black velvet, on which  
mbroidered small silver spangles, giving an older  
ance still to the otherwise matron dress. The neck  
oulders, too, were hidden ; the robe fitting tightly to  
coat, leaving exposed the fair round arms alone.  
n her head she wore a bandeau of diamonds,—at her  
*stance, to-night*. Generally she would wear no jewels.

It was observed that Marie Amélie received with more than her accustomed courtesy the beautiful Señorita de Montrillo. The queen retained the young girl in conversation far longer than the limited period which was her share, among the crowding guests ; and her eyes, inexpressibly tender and beaming, followed the figure of the conventual-looking maiden, as she moved away from the royal group to give space for others to approach their majesties. The Señora Montrillo left her daughter by her husband's side, and turning from her with a lingering glance of maternal love and pain, she took the arm of a gentleman of her acquaintance, and made her way to where the young Englishman was conversing with a small party of gentlemen.

He recognized the señora as she approached, with a grand courtliness, too cold an acknowledgment of his countrywoman's kindnesses in one of another nation ; but she rejoiced at that coldness, it was a trait which promised, more than any other, subservience to her wishes ; for she believed it was not devotion that would charm her daughter. She did not know that the coldness she saw for the first time in the young stranger was by no means a part of his natural temperament, but the effect of fixed resolutions by no means to suffer himself to be drawn into the vortex of society, which he desired to handle as an aid, but to preclude from trespassing upon those great schemes which his military studies were unfolding. The circle of the Montrillos possessed too many allurements, in its affinity with his family interests, for him to mix familiarly in it, and he intended to present himself no more at their hotel. Once he had made them a visit of ceremony.

With a movement as stately as his own, the men around him standing aside, the lady bent her head and addressed him ; and in answer to that which she spoke, he bowed low and with surprise ; but, giving her his arm, they threaded the crowd together, and the other gentlemen, to whom he spoke a few words of explanation, watched them a moment with well-bred astonishment, and turned away. There were draped recesses in those regal saloons, where hearts that *must speak* might be partly concealed from external gaze. *To one of these she led him.*

"Señor Francisco de la Vega!" she said, no longer in the French language, which hitherto she had spoken with him, but in the rich Castilian tongue, which sent the red blood into his face and powerfully thrilled the assumed rein upon his enthusiasm; and laying her hand upon his arm, slowly she spoke with her divine enunciation,—"*Señor de la Vega, conocí á su madre!*"

Francisco started.

"Señora, is it possible? have I the happiness to meet one who was acquainted with my mother?"

"It is so. I recognized you on the day of the *fête champêtre*, and my husband and myself did not need to ask questions. When you honoured my *salon* with your presence, your voice was the echo of music which has not yet departed from our ears. I have not been able to resist my desire to converse with the son of her whom her people regard as saintly—so virtuous was she, as well as beautiful. Pardon me if I pain you by these expressions; and if at any moment you will visit us, we shall be too much charmed. The hearts of your mother's people, Señor de la Vega, are warm; they are strangers to the air of these colder climes; and with one of our own country we do not hold ceremony. Permit me to hope I shall have the happiness to receive you;—but I detain you. I will ask you to lead me to the Señor de Montrillo, whom I left with our daughter, in order to express to you our compliments."

"I pray you no, señora. I beg of you tell me of my mother, for whom I have not ceased to weep; and since you thus kindly honour me, I entreat you let it be forgotten that we have been hitherto strangers. Speak without reserve of my parents, since you were their friend," said Francisco, eagerly; but before the lady could reply, he continued: "I knew not this bond existed between us; but I felt your goodness, and I should have availed myself of the honour of your acquaintanceship by presenting myself frequently to you, but that the studies in which I am engaged consume almost all my hours, and I have been obliged to place a stern veto upon inclinations; or, in the midst of the fascinations of *Paris*, with my love of pleasure and gaiety, I should speedily defeat the end for which I came here, and *by disgrace bring* disappointment to noble hearts at home."

Francisco spoke earnestly, for he felt that in speaking with one by whom his mother had been beloved he could place no bounds to his confidence.

The señora listened breathlessly, but he proceeded no farther on that subject. Suddenly he asked when and where she made the acquaintance of the Señora de la Vega.

"I saw her on the night of her presentation among her own people, after her return from Europe, the occasion upon which she first met her husband. Yes, I saw the first meeting of your parents! I attended their marriage!" Then the señora poured forth to the entranced ear of Francisco delicious histories of which he had never heard; and he yielded himself entirely to the delight of the conversation, until the señora was herself amazed at the lateness of the hour; and, rising hastily, they sought her husband in the rooms which were far less crowded than before.

"We shall see you then soon, that is happiness," said the señora; then in a sad tone she exclaimed, "We are denied the pleasure your parents would have felt, had they survived. Our only child dooms herself to the cloister! Ah! you can feel for us; it is too sad! We bring her into the world with a vague hope, but the hope is fainter every day; for it seems that her heart is buried. There is, alas! no human love which can attract it; else might we yet see a revocation of her own surrender and our suffering."

As the señora uttered these words, they approached the spot where the Señorita de Montrillo, by the side of her father, had attracted, by her grace and unusual appearance, greater attention than was her wont.

"Ah! there is my daughter," said the señora; and taking the hand of La Maria, she placed it in that of Francisco, saying as she did so, "The offspring of those who loved each other cannot meet as strangers!"

The action and the words had a great effect upon Francisco,—he had never in his life been so moved.

The remarkable conversation of the evening was crowned by this mysterious introduction; for as Francisco raised his eyes to the face of the señorita, he thought it the most extraordinary countenance he had ever beheld. Doubtless it was, for the power of mystical prejudices upon a disposition which admitted no confidant, was the expression graven in

the midst of her beauty. Sympathy and tenderness, strange and potent spirits, swept all that away ; and in the days when the frosted stream received the rays of the sun, Francisco no longer marvelled at the thrill which he felt, as the touch of that pale girl's hand, placed in his own by her mother, appeared to subvert his being. But the last guests were departing ; the suite of rooms were almost deserted.

" Our carriage shall set you down, Señor de la Vega," said the señora, " if you will order it to your destination."

That Francisco declined, as his apartments were in an opposite direction ; but the señora was leaning on her husband's arm,—his own must be offered to her daughter, and the hand of Maria Lopez Concepciona trembles with a new and indefinable pleasure, as it rests upon that strong young arm.

The following week certain circles in Paris were ringing with the news that the daughter of a distinguished family attached to a foreign embassy had left her home with an English gentleman, a student at the *Académie Militaire*.

It was from the lips of the passionate mother that Francisco himself first heard this story ; and with rage and indignation young Cameron instantly declared his resolve to trace and punish its originators. Alarmed at the tempest she had created, the wily lady would have quelled its fury ; but of that task she was incapable.

As Francisco was hastily quitting the apartment, in spite of her entreaties that he would remain, he encountered the señorita, who, at sight of himself, manifested the greatest agitation. " She also," thought Francisco, " has heard this story."

Her neck, arms, and brow grew crimson beneath his glance ; but she extended her hand to him, he carried it to his lips, departed from the room, and from the house, and shortly it was known that the young English student, Mr. Cameron, was badly wounded by the ball of his antagonist in *une affaire d'honneur*, which vindicated the implied aspersion of the Señorita de Montrillo. The game which the Señora de Montrillo ably played, was one which professed to restore to Holy Church a wandering member, in robbing her of a votary ; and much plausible argument

passed between herself and her confessor; in which the subtle evinced their subtlety, but woman came off the victor.

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## CHAPTER XV.

"She is faint, her feet are bleeding,  
All her feeble strength is worn;  
In the plain no soul is heeding,—  
She is there alone, forlorn.  
Bitter are the tear-drops blinding,  
Bitter wear of grief and pain;  
Bitterest of all the finding  
That her dream was false and vain."

"THE PRIORY.

"DEAR MARY,—My mother forbids that I should see or write to you. I owe my mother the obedience of a daughter, and that I will yield her; but I owe an allegiance to *him*. Is it not so, Mary? therefore, I must write to you, and therefore I must see you. I beg of you to walk by the meadows and meet me. I will leave this at twelve to-morrow. When I return, I shall say to my mother that I have disobeyed her; that I have seen Mary Cameron by an appointment of my own, and if she desires it, I shall repeat to her our conversation. Do not fail to come to your unhappy  
"LUCY.

"P.S.—I shall ask Edward to take this note to you, and I do not think he will refuse."

"I should think not," I said, as I closed the note; but I did not tell Edward the contents, for I could not comprehend him. He was more tender than ever to me, but he avoided even the name of Francisco.

I did not fail to go. And very mournfully I walked along; for I had no news from Paris excepting of Francisco's improvement in health, of which I was very thankful; but I desired, more than I could express, that in some way the *mystery should be solved*. She came along without her *usual buoyancy*; and before we met, I knew how it was with

her. When we came up to each other, we both wept ; then, although the weather was so cold, we made a seat of the bank, and the first words Lucy said were, "Do you know that it is all over, Mary ? Do you know that they have forbidden me to speak to him again ? and have told me, though I know how false it is, that he has disgraced himself ?"

The little girl spoke with a voice that rent my heart.

"Oh, Mary ! Mary ! can this be, and I live ?"

"You can know that you are at present separated, and not cease to live," I replied, "but you can never know, for it is not true, that he has disgraced himself."

Then I proceeded to tell Lucy every particular I had received from Cranston Barton ; for I thought it due to him, in absence, that she should be made acquainted with the minutest fragment that bore upon the subject. Very little I knew, but that, on the voice of trust and confidence, and received by a faithful affection, grew solemn with truth, and half dispelled our wretchedness when we had fully discussed it.

How she hung upon my words ! how she left off weeping to listen ! how she clasped her small hands ! and finally laid her head once more on the bosom where he had left her.

Then she began to speak of her parents. She told me that they believed Francisco dishonourable, and would ask no explanation from him ; and that they considered it their duty to forbid all further intercourse between herself and Francisco ; which they had done in the most decisive terms.

Loving as Lucy did with all the strength of her character, she yet, with the high resolve of her daughterly regard, shielded their conduct from blame. Painful as was the reflection, she believed that the circumstances called for the course they had taken, and by which she must abide, even should it destroy her ; but she mingled a vow to him with every regret of the pain they suffered in barring her happiness.

That was her religion ! loftier than the mysterious vows they breathe in temple domes—loftier than the prayers of *priests who kneel by altar-steps*. The iron of it entered my *soul*.



She taught me—that young martyr-spirit—what is meant by “Honour thy father.”

But our hearts ached—ached, notwithstanding the false hope which we exchanged. We talked long—and we walked backward and forward long silent; then we embraced, and parted sorrowfully. But I remembered his solemn charge, and the words of my promise; and my last bidding to her was “to hold his honour stainless, for such I knew it would be proved.” And she looked up to the lowering clouds of heaven and smiled shiveringly.

Events crowded fast upon each other after this. In a few days more I heard from Cranston Barton that Francisco had almost recovered, together with the intelligence that Francisco was aware that his engagement with Lucy Raymond was superseded by her parents. It had affected him at first in a frightful manner, threatening a recurrence of the fever. He should not have read those letters; but seeing their addresses, he insisted on their being given up to him. And to have combated his will in his condition would have aggravated the evil.

He had sworn great oaths in his first fierce anger, and Cranston had offered no remonstrance, for he was a wise nurse. Then Francisco became quite calm—the strangest and most mysterious repose fell over him—he talked of the instability of the plans made by men—and of the irresistible Providence which bends hither and thither the infinite spirit to accomplish the order to which it was framed ere yet the world was created. Cranston Barton was fitted to his post: he did not contend with the returning strength of the late surcharged brain with provoking reasonings. The sun smiled gloriously upon the Boulevards when the two friends arm-in-arm set forth to inhale the fresh breeze of health and life.

I have written you the history which preceded this time, and brought about events to preserve unbroken the thread of their history; but all this period Cranston Barton was groping in the darkness of utter suspense, which the sealed lips of Francisco imposed upon him; and I, in absence and sorrow, moaned in my spirit, for I could not account for this *conduct in my brother.*

*Though Francisco could not write to me, nor did he send*

me any messages, I wrote frequently to him ; but my letters were of course constrained, since the bride he had committed to me was not only taken from him but from me ; and until he approached the subject, his Parisian affairs could not be touched upon.

Shortly after that last letter from Cranston, that is, when papa had been at home about six weeks, a carriage rolled up to the door, from which emerged Cranston ; and very long conversations he and I had, during the day or two he was able to remain. He sadly required to be back at Trinity ;—he made great sacrifices to his friendship for us, but he would not admit that it was so.

I was dreadfully uneasy when he had told me all he knew. At one moment I wished to set out myself to Paris ; the next, the angry words of Mrs. Raymond recurred to me, mockingly, "Young men of that age do not always confide in their sisters ;" in short, I was tormented with doubts, and every moment their shadows grew darker. And this had fallen to me, who, six months ago, had not tasted worldly anxiety, and to whom trouble, except trouble for the loss of my dead, was altogether unknown. How should it end ?

Cranston Barton committed to me his suspicion that, after the first tumult of passion was over—the wounded vanity consequent upon the rejection,—Francisco could not have lamented the rupture of his engagement.

Yet had he parted from Lucy in that very room a few short months ago only, when, if ever love was exchanged on earth, and vows registered in heaven, my eyes beheld, my ears heard, that theirs had been such.

And now I heard that he did not regret their severance.

Then my early suspicion (not of him, but of others) returned with fresh and double force, and I questioned Cranston again and again in what manner Francisco had spoken of the young girl whose name he had conceived to have been traduced in unison with his own. Had he spoken of her by name ?—Had he named her more than once ?—Did Cranston think possibly he could love her ?

Francisco had spoken of the incident once, when he had called her the *Señorita Montrillo*. And he had entered upon *this subject but once*, when he briefly explained to Cranston

the cause of the duel ; but he would not bear to be questioned by his friend, although he expressed the liveliest sense of gratitude for the manner in which Cranston had attended upon him. In that respect he had been the Francisco of old. Nevertheless, when Cranston proposed leaving Paris, Francisco did not ask him to remain, nor would he entertain the proposition of himself returning to England. That idea was scouted with fiery impatience. But why ? England, that held Lucy Raymond !—England that held another whose sisterly affection never could desert him !

Without doubt there was a powerful incentive binding him where he was, to which we possessed a clue, but a slight a clue ; and since Francisco was now alone, and since he had not written to me by his friend, how could we hope to arrive at it ?

Mrs. Cameron was very kind to me—yes, certainly she was very kind ; but the house was altogether changed. I kept at a distance from the visitors, who paid their respects and made their compliments to my father's bride. Doubtless my absence would be remarked upon—but that was immaterial to me ; I had a grave life all my own.

Edward continued to visit me, with scarcely the intermission of a day ; and through all my trouble, which made me angry or wayward, as the case might be, I knew that he was more fond of me every day.

It was come to pass with him thus—his own words :—

“ You have grown to be a part of my nature, Mary. I want you, Mary ; I want my bride.”

Whenever he dared trespass on my mood, he urged with remonstrances, entreaties, and tenderness the subject of our marriage ; but I was haughtily decided not to be cut off from the family of my husband. They slighted me as his *fiancée* ; they would stand aloof from me as his wife. That should not be.

My heart thirsted for the sight of Lucy, yet it was impossible for me to see her, and I did not exonerate Edward in that matter ; I did not know how sorely he was tried, and how he clung to his engagement with a girl whom his parents now thoroughly disapproved, with all the tenacity of his nature, which refused to surrender its idol.

Lucy bore that heartrending time I have never (I know only that she survived it to bear not a trace of power); but doubtless the blessing which attends altered duty, whose cross she had taken up, would be port.

not see her at church, where she had hitherto been a trying attendant.

in the drawing-room with Mrs. Cameron upon one when visitors were announced, and being there I remained, and I presently heard of Lucy on the part, careless lips of these acquaintances. They who experienced the sensation of hearing such remarks in circumstances, will not accuse me of exaggeration say that this small broadside almost overwhelmed me. Irritation and vexation checked me.

as Raymond had not appeared the other day when led at the Priory; report said she was confined to bed; was that true?"

Wood Hall was the fountain-head," glancing at me; took not the slightest notice, either of that allusion or of leading inquiries, and Mrs. Cameron could only observe she had not the pleasure of knowing Miss Raymond information was evidently very agitating, by the expression of the ladies' faces.

Cameron and myself never named the name of so, for I felt, notwithstanding my struggles to the contrary, that a black cloud had fallen over my brother, and only his own hand could clear away,—terrible thought, we esteem and love.

## CHAPTER XVI.

And she sits and gazes at me  
With those deep and tender eyes,  
Like the stars so still and saint-like,  
Looking downward from the skies.  
Utter'd not, yet comprehended,  
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer ;  
Soft rebukes in blessings ended,  
Breathing from her lips of air.

LONGFELLOW.

At length my father spoke to me (several months had elapsed since last we discussed it) of my marriage. On my approaching birthday I should attain my twentieth year, and the home my affianced had provided for me had been carefully prepared. Papa did not see that, because a cessation of civilities had taken place between ourselves and the Raymonds, the troth to their son should not be fulfilled. I was greatly embarrassed during that interview, so much so, that papa became very anxious. He regarded me almost sternly, but he avoided questioning me of my feelings, and the concluding sentence with which he left me, was to the effect that he would wish to see me married during the two following months.

I had not slept all night, when, the next morning I arose restless and feverish, and dressed myself. It was about five o'clock, and the beginning of May. I looked from the window—all nature was lovely, bursting into an emerald green; I put on my bonnet, and went downstairs; the servants were not down.

I unfastened the glass door into the garden, and passed out.

I took my way to the church. I oftener than ever went there now,—that is, at such seasons when I was least likely to be observed; for I had no wish that the villagers should *conceive I bewailed my mother afresh*, since another had *taken her place*, for truly it was not so. I was satisfied now

to have a mother in heaven. I wished to go to her, I did not wish that she should come to me. But at that spot, of all other places, I was most impressible of right.

Thence I drew my instincts of evil or of good, and I went there that early morning to debate in that quietude, with her spirit hovering about me, whether it were required of me to be the wife of Edward, or whether it were *sin* to marry him.

Had it come to this?

I sat down wearily beside the grave; the grass was damp, too damp to be made a seat, with the early dew. But I did not think about that. I did not shape my prayer into words such as would have entered mortal ears, but the burden of my soul rose up to the sky, that wisdom might be granted me to define my way. I reviewed our past lives—I weighed ourselves—I found my scale go down unworthily. I compared the prospects of our separate futures, I compared them unitedly. I took counsel of my reason—I summoned my principle—I did everything but look into my heart. But think what I might, feel what I might, there was nothing but chaos in all.

When the chimes rang out nine o'clock, I started to my feet. I had sat there four hours; I felt myself ill; I was shaking with some sudden malady. With difficulty I steadied myself. I turned to get home, and felt relieved by the exertion. I was not to be laid by *then*. I did not mention my illness when I sat down to the breakfast-table, and my companions were used now to my face being pale. I expected Edward Raymond shortly—I had made no decision, and I had no human arm to lean upon. The dependences of my childhood, where were they?

Should I appeal to the Bartons as to the tenacity of an engagement equivalent in their eyes to marriage? Miss Davies, in the changes that had come to me, could have no opinion; besides, she was far away. My high-souled Lucy—I could not approach her. My Lillie was sleeping in her grave; and Francisco, oh! what of him?

"My mother! my mother!"

I was in my own room. A letter was brought in and given to me; I caught it up, for I saw Francisco's writing *at last*.

"LONDON, 12th May.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—If my long silence has not destroyed your love for me, you will hear the announcements I am about to make to you at least patiently. *Very great changes* have happened to me since I last saw you, Mary. A month since I left the Académie Militaire, having acquired already a military education which most men would consider efficient. I am commencing to fulfil the intentions of which *you* have long been informed. You know that I have never had any disposition to enter the service of a European government. Not having attained my majority, I am aware how difficult a business matter devolves upon my uncle. I am writing him herewith ; but my decision admitted of no delay—there was more than life, Mary, hanging upon that decision. I am coming to that which you, as a woman, will feel most acutely. But you will rejoice with me, Mary—sister of my heart!—for I have found that for which the divine soul of man thirsts and struggles. I embark at Southampton on the 17th inst., for the west coast, Lima—my birthplace. Our berths are already secured on board the *Atrato*; and, Mary, dear, I am not going alone. If you could but see her! She is an angel—not one of your mere earthly ones—she has the air of a temple about her. Had it not been for her love for me, she would have been the bride of the Church ere this. We were married at her father's house a week ago. My country is her country ; my interests are her interests—we are truly united. Would that *you*, Mary, my sister, could accompany us to the land where a wide field of action is opening to me, and whence the affections of my childhood have never been recalled. Do not think that I have no regrets at leaving *you*. It is you who embody my England. God bless you, Mary, my beloved sister! We will meet again—will we not? after a few years, perhaps. Take into your faithful keeping the love of my Maria—my bride. She stands by me as I write to you, and reads what I say. Imagine that I embrace you in this hour of our parting—my own and only sister.

"FRANCISCO."

I laid down the paper. I had imbibed its contents, the *letter and the spirit*. There required no comments of my *weakness or my relief*, my sorrow or my thankfulness.

Whatever were his faults, my Francisco was, in intent and in purpose, an honest man. I could not doubt that, else would he not be returning to his native country, whither the fame of him from the Montrillos must precede him.

But, he had fallen from his early truth. Ah! yes—and Lucy? how would Lucy hear that he was married? Married! *was* Francisco actually married—and to another than Lucy Raymond? But he was capable still of a pure affection; those illusions to his wife (his wife!) were not merely the ebullition of passion. And he was going away, and I should never see him any more. Well, I knew that the grave would as likely yield up the dead as that country, which would test and concentrate his engeries, unloose her grasp upon the years of his life. I should never see him any more. But I *would* see him *once* more—*once more*—then it would all be over. Why should I not? I was a woman—I was not a child. My father never had refused my wishes. To London—to Southampton I would go. “The sea shall not engulf him until I have seen my brother again; and having once more seen his face, and heard the sound of his voice, he shall depart, and I will not shed a tear.” I did not even wish to retain him. He had chosen his work, and I heartily approved it. He was lost to Lucy; I might bless the woman, then, who had stepped in and *would* bless *him*. It was right—all right, doubtless—though hard to bear at first. But there was not a day to lose. This was the 14th of May;—three more days and they would sail. I must be in London that night.

I threw open my door—I ran down into the the library; papa and Mrs. Cameron were there. Papa was walking up and down the room in great excitement. Mrs. Cameron was perfectly composed; and I did not like the expression that sat upon her countenance. I advanced into the room, and before I could begin to speak, papa said, “Here is a pretty announcement from that young villain, to go and swindle his acquaintances all round, and carry off the daughter of his friend, and take himself nobody knows whither. I’ll wipe my hands of him altogether; I’ll never own a Cameron who is a rascal. I wish he may get hold of his property till he *is one-and-twenty*; to be sure, he can get at a portion which, *thank heaven, he can’t do much mischief with. He may*



starve—he may die ! My poor brother Reginald ! this comes of your foreign notions.”

I vainly endeavoured to put in a word during this torrent. I could only do so when papa was compelled to stop for want of breath.

I said, “ Whence is this news ? ”

“ From Dumaré, of course ! Who else should it be from ? ”

“ And have you no letter from Francisco ? ”

“ Not I—he’ll never write—you’ll never hear from him again—you may make yourself secure upon that point—he’s gone to the Poles,—or anywhere you like ! ”

“ Be pleased to listen to me, papa. I have a letter from Francisco, which, with your permission, I will read to you. And let me beg of you to put some limits to your credence and consequent indignation ; for I believe, whatever Mons. Dumaré’s information may be, that it is not correct. This is what Francisco says ; ”—and I read so much as I chose to read in the presence of Mrs. Cameron, and sufficient to illustrate what I had advanced. Papa’s astonishment knew no bounds ;—but he was no longer intolerably annoyed ; he saw some chance of righting things. “ Bless my soul ! where does the boy write from ? How the deuce does he think I am to manage his property without him, at his age ! Who in the world can he have married ? A born lady, I’ll stake my honour ! And do they sail on the 17th, do you say, my dear ? Well, well, I’m sorry they haven’t time to run down, and say good bye. I should have liked to have introduced *my* lady too ; but, all things considered, perhaps it is as well not.” (I thought it *was*.) “ Upon my word, I have a good mind to see him off ! ”

“ Oh, my dear father, do so ; and permit me to accompany you. Indeed—indeed I feel that I cannot allow our Francisco to go away, for no one knows how long, and not even see him, to say ‘ farewell ! ’ Do let us go, papa.”

“ What do you say, my dear ? ” said my father, turning to his wife.

“ I say, my dear, that I think it would be highly *inconsiderate* to take any such step ; and in Miss Cameron’s *present position*, too, when people are already on the *qui vive* to know why her marriage does not come off. They

would say we forgot ourselves, if she were running all over the country to take leave of her cousin, who, after all, for any evidence you appear to have to the contrary, is possibly exactly the person whom Dumaré represents him." I was suffocating with rage. *This* in my presence.—"Inconsiderate"—"Miss Cameron"—"we forget ourselves"—"running all over the country"—"the person."

"I beg of you, papa, to walk out at that glass window with me. Your daughter has a word to say to you." He gave a glance at his wife, but, accustomed long to indulge me, he stepped out upon the lawn, and I followed him.

"My dear papa, I must go to London!"

"Well, my dear."

"You grant me permission? You are not annoyed with me?"

"Annoyed with you, Mary?"

"Well, well, papa, let it pass, dear," and tears were in my eyes.

"You will order the carriage then?—I shall take Anne with me; it is now half-past eleven, and we shall go by the two o'clock train."

"It can't be done, my child—and how are you to go at all? Why, you have never been from home; you have really never been in London; it is not possible, indeed it is not possible."

"All things are possible to be attempted, papa, to aid a worthy end; I cannot allow my brother to depart without taking that farewell of him which I owe to his goodness for years; for I never will believe, papa, that *any* one else will exercise over him the exact kind of influence that I do."

"Ah, yes! he was greatly attached to you, certainly he was;—but I fear Mrs. Cameron will not approve of your going."

"Mrs. Cameron has nothing to do with me!" I exclaimed.

"Hush! Mary—she has a great deal to do with you now."

"*But I am going, papa, and there is no time to be lost; therefore I depend on you to have the carriage round; and*

you may feel assured I shall be ready." My mind relieved in this way, I hastened back to the house ; I had worsted my stepmother on our first battle-field, that was certain—but was it true I was going to London ? going to Francisco and his wife ? I flew up the stairs—I pealed my bell. Anne came running. I was not an imperious mistress—I seldom dislocated bells.

"Anne ! get a travelling-trunk in my dressing-room directly, and send Price here !"

"Yes, ma'am," said the girl wonderingly.

In the mean time I commenced altering my dress. Price came, and the portmanteau.

"Now, Anne, go to your room, and put into a small box as many things of your own as you will require for four days ; and get yourself ready to go out with me—quick ! for I shall be out of the house in twenty minutes. Now, Price, put in these things, and help me to fold this silk dress."

So I directed them, all the time making myself calmer by my conscious decision. I wondered at myself. I was tying my bonnet-string ; the wrapper was being put upon the box, when there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," I said authoritatively ; and in the glass before which I stood, I saw Mrs. Cameron enter, her face very flushed.

"Mary, your papa wishes to speak to you in the library !"

I caught her tone.

"Good !" I replied, "I shall be taking leave of him in a moment."

She looked aghast at my resolution. She moved naturally out of my way, as my dress swept by her, in passing out at the door. She had made papa quite uncomfortable about suffering me to leave home alone ; and still she was unwilling that he should accompany me.

"You know I have Anne, and how can I come to any harm, papa ?"

"It is not the thing, Mary—what will Edward say ?"

"Edward !" I exclaimed,—it was the first time I had thought of him ;—"I rather wonder he is not here ; but, *papa, we ought to be gone.*"

"*You ought, indeed, if you go !*"

"If I go!" I felt myself already there.

"Good bye, papa." We embraced.

"Good bye, my dear; take care of yourself!"

"Good bye!" I said quietly to Mrs. Cameron;—she had just entered. I did not hear her response. The servants put in the luggage. Anne was mounted on the box seat. I leant back in the carriage almost overpowered. It was a great step that I had taken—and had yet to take. We rolled on at a great pace to catch the train. I heard a horse's feet behind us presently. I turned my head as the galloping came nearer, and there was Edward. He overtook us, and rode by the side of the wheels.

"How came you to think of going to London, my dear?" he said.

"To London!" echoed the coachman.

"To London!" re-echoed Anne by his side.

Surprise surpassed their servantly propriety.

"I hope to return on Thursday, Edward."

"And where are you going, dear, in London? It is such a sudden thing to me. I was riding along the bridle-road to the Hall, and by accident met your father, who told me you had started for London a few minutes before; and I did not wait to hear any particulars, wishing to overtake you."

I had never known Edward so interesting as he appeared to me this morning, nor had considered him so handsome. The rapid pace at which he had ridden had brought a glow to his face; he was riding a very beautiful horse, and altogether the sight of him made my heart leap up as it had never leapt up before at the sight of him of whom I was so fond, but whom it seems that I could not have loved. And how anxious he was for me—how gentlemanly!—how affectionate! He threw the rein of his heated horse over a postern in the yard of the station, and helped me to alight with the utmost care. There was a little time to the train—about five minutes. Our luggage was arranged—our tickets were taken—Edward and I paced up and down the platform.

"I do think, Mary," said Edward, "I never saw any one so beautiful as you are—so thoroughly beautiful!"

*He said this with such an intensity of feeling that I could*

scarcely believe it was my usually unimpassioned Edward who spoke the words. "I am glad that you exhibit such an excellent taste, dear."

I had very seldom indeed addressed him by any term of endearment; I could not recall, in fact, that I had ever done so before.

"It is more than taste, Mary, it is the proudest love; that's what it is, Mary. You cannot know how I love you, or how I feel towards you. I pray God to bring you back again to me safe, and then you will be mine Mary, *immediately*, will you not? Then I shall be at rest. Till then, I am always imagining that some one will steal you from me. I cannot get over the feeling—it grows upon me. Oh, you do not know what I suffer!"

I was so surprised that I could not answer, but I appreciated to the full this indubitable declaration of the depth of feeling which I had inspired.

At that moment the bell rang; the train drew up, and he put me in. I sat in the corner of an otherwise empty first-class carriage. He was holding my hand upon the sill of the open window, and looking at me till the train was in motion.

Then he said fervently, "God bless you!" and I felt my eyes fill with tears.

How beautiful was his face; it was a face which strong emotion roused to sublimity, out of its habitual calm.

I watched him to the last; I even stretched my head from the window to catch another glimpse of him. An instant and he was gone.

For one half-hour of that journey he filled my soul—there was not a valve for another thought.

Had I mistaken him all this time? Had I thought him tame, spiritless; too gentle for a man? And had he but been keeping a rein upon his feelings, that hereafter, in our home, I might know him for what he was? I could not answer—but I loved him. Yes! I loved him in that interval, if I never did before; and if there is an essence in the human spirit which is unpolluted, then is it more *blessed for a brief moment to imbibe the ineffable breath of the soul's pure worship, than for the term of unmeasured*

life to enslave the master passion rampant in a mighty mind.

I awoke from my abandonment ; I remembered that Edward had not uttered a syllable of my purpose, and my trial—he had not named the name of Francisco. Wrapt in his love for me, and I in its recipience, we had never touched upon the subject uppermost in my heart.

Did he know that Francisco was married ? He must know he was leaving England.

From whom would Lucy hear that she was a widow—before she had been a bride ? Selfish hearts ! we should have done something !—what could we do ? all was so painful.

On rushed the train to the metropolis. I will not pretend to deny my natural sensations of wild pleasure and excitement, with which the vast outskirts of the mightiest of cities first met my astonished eyes.

To hear of a marvel, and to be familiar with its nature, is a different thing to encountering it. I gathered with my eye the mass of the buildings through which we were rushing faster and faster, it appeared.

The height above the streets, and our equality with the highest buildings, made me giddy. Then we rolled into the station. There was the wildest excitement to my uninitiated sight. Anne and her mistress were thankful when they were seated in a hired vehicle, ordering themselves to be driven to St. James's Street. Had we arrived ? Was this London ?—We threaded the crowded streets,—what noble mansions ! what elegant women,—what proud stately-looking gentlemen !

But I was to meet Francisco,—shortly, I should be by his side. How would *she* meet me ? Would she think it unmaidenly, she, the new-made matron, to come a journey of a few hours only to see and take leave of her husband, who for nine long years had been like a brother to me, long ere she had ever seen him ?

How my heart throbbed as we drew up at the door, and servants came out and put down the steps of our unpretending carriage. I, descending, glanced up to the windows of the hotel. I met the eyes of Francisco with a start.

*Yes ! and he has vanished—I am within the door—the next moment in his arms.*

"Oh, Mary!" he said, "I did not think you would come. And she will think it so sweet of you! Let me help you. How are they all—my uncle, I mean?—Mary! you look so pale!"

"Stay one moment, my dearest: everything is so new to me—there—I feel better now."

"Ah, yes! no wonder you are fatigued! were you never in London before? There, these are our apartments"—he opened a door from the gallery. I followed him breathlessly—I was about to see Francisco's wife!—It was a very handsome room—I thought so at least then—and empty.

He passed on. "This is my lady's bower," knocking at the inner door.

"*Entrad!*" responded a voice—oh, how sweet!

And I saw her, the fair young bride of my brother. She rose surprisedly, and blushed greatly to see a strange lady with her husband. He spoke to her in Spanish, "*Maria, de mi corazon!* I have brought you one who loves you; you love her also already. It is my cousin—it is Mary."

She gave a little start of pleasure, and held out her hands to me, murmuring, "*Ah! que hermosa! y es tan amable, como linda!*"

I gazed into her face, as to penetrate into her soul. I took her very heart into my heart. I held out my arms; she sprang up; she fell upon my neck. I clasped her tightly then, as I had so often clasped another who had loved him. The tears from my overcharged heart rained upon her bright hair, as if they were breaking from a fountain. We loved each other, and we each knew it; and he who stood by in his manly pride and joy,—he knew it too;—he was scarcely less affected than ourselves.

Then I began to examine her minutely; I had already examined him; for a glance sufficed for one with whose every feature and movement I was familiar. He was taller and handsomer, and had the air of a man of distinction; his face was far more earnest, too, in its expression, notwithstanding his present excitement. Ah, yes! he, too, had suffered since we parted; but there was no mistaking the radiance of the fresh happiness and pride that was about him—*that of the new-made bridegroom!* And she? I seated

her beside me—I pushed away my bonnet—I took her hand—I scanned her every feature ; he smiling amidst his Castilian endearments.

I had truly seen none like her. That was not wonderful in my seclusion ; but there could be but *one* of her mould. But I am not going systematically to describe her, for she was one of those persons whom we feel rather than see. I will tell you, however, that she had dark braided hair ; it would have been shining, but for the diamonds above it. As it was, it looked like a velvet bandeau, around which the circlet sparkled ; but I scarce saw the gems for the light of her eyes—they were great, grand orbs. I have forgotten her dress—I suppose that it was costly ; he always admired rich robes. But we must speak with each other. He brought his chair near us, taking a hand of each ; and if there ever was pleasure within sight of a great grief, we three felt it then.

We could all speak in French, and Maria knew a little of English ; and with a little Spanish we had no difficulty to converse. It was very astonishing to be listening to each other—we who were heart-full. We made general descriptions do—we exchanged stories. I gave them a little sketch of our changes at Lynwood ; she uttered a few broken sentences, by which I learned how unhappy she once was—how happy she became one day, not long since ; while he smiled and encouraged, or contradicted, with the marvellous charm of bliss.

We settled business also ; and it did not become us, who were so soon to be parted, to descend to particulars of each other's faults—our hearts were open to each other. When the first burst of our meeting was over, the thought began to close upon me like a pall, that they were leaving me. They were happy ! the future lay a bright life to them ! But I—what was mine ? I began to grow cold as the night came on. The next day but one we should leave London for Southampton ! As we rose up from dinner, Francisco casually said, " Who would like to see an opera ? "

I said—" Of all things, I should."

" Would you, dear ? Then we'll go ; but we must go immediately."

" Are you sure you will like it ? " I said to Maria.

" *We like always the same thing,*" she replied in English.



I heard that she had gone out very little while she resided with her parents in London. Operas in London were almost as new to her as they were to me.

So we got into a carriage, and were driven to her Majesty's Theatre. I was not at all "decked," as Francisco called it—scarcely sufficient, perhaps, he thought ; but that was a small falling off. I believe I carried with me the fresh air of the country, for people looked at me very much ; though how they remarked me by the side of *her*, I could not think ; it was, doubtless, my superior height.

That music—never can I forget it ! To say that I was intoxicated by it, is to give but a faint idea of the sensations it awoke. "All is lost now"—the divine air of *La Sonnambula*—it thrilled through the house. How could those women sit unmoved—talking, too, while it went on ? I bent forward to catch every tone of the heavenly strains. I felt how remarkable I must appear ; but I was entranced.

I heard Francisco laugh ; that low laugh recalled me to reality. I turned my head to inquire if his capacity for hearing were impaired, as soon as I could find words. A strange gentleman was standing by Maria's seat ; he was intently regarding me. I felt myself blush beneath his gaze, for I was agitated, and surprised to see any one in the box beside ourselves. Francisco took a step towards me, and said, "Allow me to present to you my friend Don Ferdinando Gonzales"—"Miss Cameron—Don Ferdinando."

The stranger bowed low, and took the seat by my side.

"Miss Cameron is an enthusiast in music," he said.

"I am not certain that I am an enthusiast ; but I cannot hear such music as they have been giving us to-night, and not feel its power."

"Ah ! this is one of those influences to which we can scarce give a name. We feel it—we don't speak of what it makes us ; it is so with all the grand images of the beautiful and the exalted. Our souls are penetrated—our tongues do not mock their sanctity by speech. There is no need to embody aspirations at the meeting of those who are kindred spirits. I will not ask if you are accustomed to these things ; I am assured that you are not. You could not long retain the charming freshness of enjoyment, even if

things so rich as music. Such perceptions as *yours* would pall. Pardon me, you are sensible of the impression which my words convey ; it requires only to look upon your face to see that noble thoughts lie at your heart. It is not *they* which I prophesy will pass away."

So Don Ferdinando talked to me, disjointedly ; and at one moment I was offended with his boldness (he appeared to deal with me with such a high hand,—he had seen my inexperience at a glance), the next I was insensibly charmed by the depth of his allusions and the flash of the metaphors with which he demonstrated.

"Oh, Mary!" said Francisco, as we were driven to our hotel, after Don Ferdinando had given me his arm through the crowd, and had placed me in the carriage with an air to which I was a stranger, "Gonzales would be a splendid fellow if he had such a wife as you ; he is excessively *distingué*, do you not think so? and as honourable a fellow as ever breathed. He sails in the *Atrato*."

I made no response. *I* the wife of Gonzales, what a dream. I beheld it,—the brilliancy,—the luxury,—the love of a princely husband.

I closed my eyes. *I* the betrothed of another,—one simple, holy, and true. What was the proud foreigner to me?

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## CHAPTER XVII.

"Till now thy soul has been all glad and gay ;  
 Bid it awake, and look at grief to-day !  
 No shade has come between thee and the sun ;  
 Like some long childish dream thy life has run :  
 But now, the stream has reach'd a deep dark sea,  
 And sorrow, dim and crown'd, is waiting thee."

THOUGH the hour was late when we reached our hotel, we did not retire immediately to bed. Had we done so—well, I cannot speculate upon what might have been.

As it was, we did not go to bed. Maria sat close to her husband, and I drew a low chair to their feet.

Then we talked of our parting. In low tones, with *trembling cadences*, the young bridegroom, with life before

him, and a path spread wide to the upward goal of fame,—he lamented that we must part.

The young wife laid my fingers upon her heart, asking if I felt its beat ; for as surely as I felt that throb, so surely my spirit had entered there—and “must she now part with me!”

I grew greatly agitated.

Of course we must part, since Europe could not retain them, and my grief must be sustained as women had sustained grief before.

But I felt the while that my heart was bursting, and that I should almost die to see the waves round their vessel, when every breeze carried them farther away ; and most probably it would be for ever. My lips caught up the burden of my heart, and I exclaimed, “For ever?”

“What is for ever?” Francisco murmured.

“Our farewell.”

“Do not say so, Mary ; I cannot hear you say such sad words, in the midst of our hope too. Why, dear, did we not think of it before ? why should not you go with us ?”

“I go with you !”

“Why not, Mary ?” He went on, with increasing earnestness—“why not, even now—what is to prevent you ? My uncle is married now ; you have neither brother nor sister”—he stopped. It dawned upon him that I had more. There was one at least to claim me. But I was mute. My mind must have passed into some intangible region—for how long I never knew. When I looked up, Francisco was watching his wife with that long glance known only to adoring love : she had fallen asleep in his arms. “Pray God !” I thought, “their love may last ;” for a thought of the forsaken and stricken Lucy would come. Had he sinned ? and was he not to suffer ? Oh ! I hoped not.

“Seriously, Mary,” he said suddenly, “go !”

“Francisco !”

“Why not, dear ? You cannot intend to marry Edward Raymond, or you would have married him long ago ; and really, Mary, such a fine girl as you are, you might make a much higher match.”

I shivered, for this was the breath of the world which had received him. He went on :—

“Not but what I think him a very good fellow, and all

that sort of thing ! but then you know, Mary, a woman, as well as a man, like you and me, wants life. Life ! ah ! it's a glorious thing ; it makes one's chest expand—the thought of its breadths, depths, bearings. And we may mould at our will the creatures in our way. Yes ! there's no denying, they who are born for a great purpose, must lord it over their race."

So he rushed on, wide from the point, but not wide from my spirit. Those were my new-born thoughts which he embodied ; those were my aspirations which I had not breathed. And they must be sealed to me for ever ; I must be still, and sit down again, and take my tranquil part ; and all as if never a blast had pealed through the slumber of my dreams. Heart, brain, and spirit revolted. What should save me from this thing, this impending stop of life ? I was tempted no more by external things ; for the wings of his ambition were wafting through his being the air of their mighty pomp. He beheld not me ; he was afar, in the kingdom of his vision ; and who shall say what strength in that hour rushed to and fro in his soul ; what birth of knowledge, what glory of genius, what seed for a deathless hereafter !

Maria awoke at length, and we saw that it was morning. He carried her in the shawls in which he had wrapt her to the bedroom at hand ; I carrying a vast lamp, the one nearest at hand. And I found Anne asleep on the couch, in my bedroom, where, with the liberty of long servitude, she had ensconced herself, and I covered her also with wrappings, and left her to sleep on. I did not go to the window to look out upon the sky—I did that when I wanted to think. I did not want to think now ; I wanted to go out of existence for a few hours. I did not believe I could sleep. A dreamless sleep would alone answer. I lay down, and as the pillows were soft and tempting, I did fall asleep. What followed the next day I cannot chronicle.

Outfits are to be got in London in the course of twenty-four hours. Mine was.

Yes, charitable reader, who have married the man or the woman of your heart, whom each would have chosen among ten thousand—on that day, tremendous in the annals of my history, a messenger left London for Lynwood Hall, bearing *with him the astounding* intelligence that my father's only child would return there no more !

Inclosed, another letter,—how had I written that? That also I never knew. I cannot remember a single feeling I possessed during that day; but my letter to him told Edward Raymond that that clasp of his hand, that gaze of his lingering eyes, was the last that he should ever take of Mary Cameron. It blessed him (mockery!); it asked his forgiveness while it shipwrecked his peace—the peace of his *early* life! But there is a sorrow which is not unto death.

The excitement at our hotel—the dismay at Lynwood—picture them!

Already I felt the heave of the ocean beneath me, already I saw that strand where Francisco played in his boyhood, and felt the breath of the tall bananas, as they swept over graves where his loved ones and lost were sleeping. And I should share his life, I should be near him! His wife would find mine a mother's soul, so aged it was. I *will* say that no dream of personal aggrandizement entered; as there might be found those who could suspect that Don Ferdinando Gonzales, in giving me an example of the men of the world, had thrust himself into my thoughts.

I was not fallen *so* low. I went not forth to deck myself; I went forth for the love of my brother—his honour *was* enough for me, and his fame would more than satisfy me.

It was sufficient that in his large heart, and in his glowing country there was room for me. I did not sit late with them that night, for they said we should have many nights together; I went to my room, sent Anne away, whose miserable face I could not bear to see, and I sat down to write; for I had a duty to perform ere I left my native land, perhaps for ever.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

We shall meet again ! oh, we yet shall meet,  
 But not in the place where we met before ;  
 Oh, not upon life's deceitful stream,  
 But where we shall meet to part no more.

DEAR CRANSTON,—When you receive these few lines, it is probable you will have heard that I am leaving England. I am going with Francisco and his wife, to a home beyond the sea. It is in vain for me to enter into explanations. I hope I shall retain *your* friendship. I am sure that I shall, and you will let me hear from you, and you will not allow *your* parents altogether to denounce me, will you—for Lillie's sake. I wish your life may be radiant with happiness : if my hopes for my friend could make it so, it would be unparalleled in the world, for you have shown me great kindness. I hope some one will charitably, kindly, see that nothing defaces those monuments. If I should *never* see them again—it is an awful thought. I am, dear Cranston, ever your sincere friend, “MARY CAMERON.”

Mary Cameron to Lucy Raymond :—

“BELOVED,—Of my faults, and perhaps my guilt, there is little left to say ; the wide judgment ere now has gone forth. Before you receive this, I shall be beyond the reach of voices, which, were I near, would curse me ; England will be fading from my sight—the rocking of my sea-chamber will be my remembrancer of the spirits I have left behind. Best beloved ! are we indeed parted—am I never again to see your face ? Little did we think we were taking of each other such a long farewell, when we parted that cold day in the spring time ! I don't think of it quite as *for ever* ; I do not peer so far ; I know that I never can forget my mother-country, and those who will love me notwithstanding all. My dear sister ! my darling ! what can I say to you ? There is not a blessing which our souls can conceive that I

do not crave for you ; and yet it all seems mockery to you. *I shall never cease to love you,—no change can come to me. Is that all in vain too ? Yet we have been very precious to each other in time long ago, which seems to me at this moment to be a century old. You will not feel that I am infamous—you will see only the dark stain of my infidelity. You will remember that I was mortal, and that I was faithless ; but you will not set your foot upon my memory. You will go with me through the surge over rivers and over lands, and beyond the Chilian hills ; and you will pray that I may sleep in peace, at length, when the first remorse is over. There is one request I would make to you. They may say of me that I trampled upon the best and holiest feelings ; that I deceived, betrayed, and forsook the love of my youth, for the sake of a brilliant marriage—I feel that this may be said. I want you never to hear it in silence. It would be sweet to me, thousands of miles away, to feel that *one* voice spoke for me, in the sole instance it can speak for me ; and that voice Lucy Raymond's. I could write pages. I beseech you, do not forget me. If it be disobedience in you, I will not ask that you write to me—not continually—but you *will* write. You will not suffer months and years to pass by, and I never hear a word from your heart. Farewell then, beloved ! my eyes are very dim. I know not if my heart ache ; it ought, and it ought not. But for the darkness, I should be, ah ! so happy. Farewell once more—sad words ! *I* scarcely dare to commit you to the keeping which is above every other keeping ; for I am unworthy to take such words upon my lips. Yours,*

“ MARY CAMERON.”

I saw in my dreams a star-lit sea, and a dance beside the waters, and proud forms glancing around, and the music of the Castilian tongue streaming upon my ear.

The scene grew silvery. I stood with Edward whispering words of love ; his arm was around me, his kisses were on my lips ; he was binding away my hair. He called me “ Mary ! his own ! ” I awoke—the two were dreams.

At daybreak my father was in London ; I heard his voice *and trembled*,—I who was accustomed to guide him. But *I was wrong now*, and error makes cowards of the bravest.

I heard high and angry voices as I passed along the gallery. I opened the door of the room instantly, whence they proceeded. Maria was not there ; that relieved me. I knew she had long risen, for she was full of thought for me : she achieved wonders in those few hours.

"Madam !" cried my father, crossing the room towards me ; "madam, are you mad ?—because I think it would be a mercy to believe so ! What do you think you mean ? For you, sir, as I was having the honour to tell you, if you hold any communication whatsoever with Mary Cameron again, I will—I will—you shall rue it, sir—you shall rue it !"

They quarrelled most furiously. I could not make my voice heard. I know not what they said ; they were near together, and I rushed between them. All this time I had not collected a thought ; when I saw my work in the passion I beheld in their faces, who had hitherto loved each other, it was the first palpable shock. I had been in the wild mad hurry of excitement, crushing anywhere, anywhere, all thought. This was dreadful ; and it was at this moment as if the mantle of Lucy Raymond fell over me, for her words and her tones came back to me, together with the image of her face and form, as she was on the day when her own wrecked hopes lay struggling with her duty as a daughter. Surely I beheld an upraised finger, a pale calm face ; and heard a murmur "Honour thy father."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

O beautiful and loved ! so loved and lost,  
How shall my sorrow count the priceless cost  
Of living in thy heart a few brief years,  
And then baptizing thee with funeral tears ?

I SAW them leave me—his wife and he. It was as I had prophesied—I shed no tear. I had insisted upon accompanying them to Southampton. Papa had gone home again, having given his word to Mrs. Cameron to return immediately ; first laying the ban of his anathema upon his daughter if she *dared to oppose his decision* that she should not leave England—that she should not have a home with Francisco



and his wife. He demanded of Francisco a promise that "no more traps should be laid for his child;" and Francisco bore with that natural anger, and did not speak the haughty words which rose to his lips. However, I believe my father trusted my pledged word.

*Her* tears fell on my face, drenching its fixedness. No word passed my lips, nor a sigh. I saw the sea at last; this was the sea! and yon vessel—I may board her, for she only conveys the passengers to the other statelier ship biding her time in the Southampton Water.

I was clasped to his heart—"for the last time" rang out the knell of lost hopes. He stood on the deck erect, relieved from the sky—a clinging figure beside him. The gigantic ship rolled on in her freedom, power, and majesty; and the receding forms each moment vaguer grew, till the vessel herself was a tiny speck on the ocean. Is it only a prayer that we utter in the hold of our breaking hearts when our eyes strain after our beloved ones, whom soon we shall behold no more.

Poor Anne superintended our return to London, to the hotel in St. James's Street, where were left the tangible evidences that I had been going abroad. Once there, and laid upon my bed, I surrendered myself to the revulsion of feeling consequent upon that through which I had passed. Remorse I knew not now; it was an anguish of regret—regret that I was left behind. The sacrifice yielded to my father's right—the victim laid upon the altar—exhausted nature could bear no more. I fell into an illness which very nearly cost me my life. As perception gradually returned, it was dreadful to recognize that which must have thrilled through the fever—it left behind it such an actual sense of pain. For some days after I was aware of where I lay, and what had happened, I could not awake to surrounding things; and when at last I was thoroughly conscious, the returning to life was frightful. When I first spoke, Anne only was in the room, though I knew another person had been about me. Presently Mrs. Barton came in; and when she saw that I was sensible of her presence, she came up to me and spoke very sweetly. I had no strength to ask questions, had I desired, which I did not. She was there—there was *nothing strange* in that,—I had not wronged her; and for the *rest that had happened*, by-and-by would do. The *life*

me had no charm; I could not conceive that it could have again; for whence could come *my* comfort? For many weeks I heard only one sound—the roar of waters dashing against the side of a vessel stretched wide open when I woke from sleep, to see figures who were not near, the unvanishing figures, and the wide white expanse of the sea. It was long I thought of Edward; when I did, upon that sole my mind was permanently fixed. My bond was—it should never be renewed. The freedom I had paid at so costly a price, I would keep. Yes; I kept it during the short time that remained; for I believed I should die. I had the weakness to suppose shock such as this would kill me. I did not know how much we can suffer and still live on. One idea I could not get rid of: where was I next to be removed? for I could not *die* in London. True, I did not see the crowded habitations, nor the whirl of the thronging streets, I felt that I was in their midst, and my breath would not surrender itself pent up there—it must have pure air more.

But the lungs might inhale the pure mountain air in the where first they expanded; but the bleeding spirit! helplessly crushed by error and suffering, where should I again find the breeze from innocence or peace? If I did go to Lynwood, where could I go? I had no idea of how I could be arranged in the midst of such circumstances; the mere thought of returning to my home was really unbearable. When I once began to consider, I could not form a tolerably accurate idea of what my conduct had been. I imagined the reception that awaited me there: the contempt of many, the rude triumph of others; the rebuff of the excellent, the wonder of the poor; the presence of my stepmother, the proximity of the Raymonds. I dared to me impossible that I could go to Lynwood, all this—which could not touch me when I should lie in my quiet grave so soon by Lillie's and my mother's side: I could not be *buried* anywhere but there—would I be endured; being a part of my portion. Once I had the hand of love would be by—my faults forgotten. It was not a soothing thought that my life would die out.

in the midst of unkindness ; though little would it reck the departing spirit what atmosphere was around it, if itself were meet to take its mysterious way. Death and the grave! dread realities! with that beyond them which mocks at human thought ; the presumption of the youth of suffering, which fancies that because it hopelessly writhes, it must mercifully sink to rest, forgetting the gravest solemnities.

When at length I entered into conversation, I was destined to be amazed by Mrs. Barton's intelligence. She informed me that upon my father's return from his agitating journey to London, he had found Mrs. Cameron—whom he left in her usual health—alarmingly ill, with a repetition of the disorder which had attacked her before her marriage, and to which she had long been subject. She had again ruptured a vessel in the lungs ; and Dr. Allison, who had been instantly sent for, considered her state so alarming, as to cause him to despatch a messenger to summon back my father, whom, however, he had passed upon the road. When my father reached home, Mrs. Cameron had slightly revived ; but she lay for many days in a most precarious state ; and it was then determined that as early as she could bear the journey, she should be brought to London for further consultory advice, previously to adopting Dr. Allison's strong opinion that she should seek change of climate.

Mrs. Barton also told me that both Mrs. Cameron and my father were most affectionately anxious about me, and that nothing but this very serious illness of his wife could have kept papa from my own sick-bed, which, however, he had wisely provided with the tenderest and most efficient nurse, when he begged my old friend to come to me.

More that day Mrs. Barton did not add ; but there was a great agitation in her manner when she told me this—more, I thought, than the occasion warranted. I felt deeply for papa ; but I, at heart, was not tender towards Mrs. Cameron. I feared dear Mrs. Barton was suffering from her close confinement in my sick-room, and her long separation from the Parsonage, which I had seldom before known her to leave.

I found the next day that she had not told me all the tidings which so nearly concerned me. Mrs. Barton inquired of me *pityingly*, how long I supposed I had lain ill. I could *not tell*. She told me there had elapsed five weeks.

I started up in my bed, exclaiming, "Where are my letters from St. Thomas?"

Mrs. Barton shook her head sorrowfully. Why did she do that? Oh, she deeply lamented all this, that my affection for my cousin had entailed upon me; but she got up quietly, and, walking to a drawer, brought out one, two letters, and placed them in my eager hand. I did not open them instantly. I saw they were both addressed by Francisco. I viewed them externally—I tried to consider what they would contain. I was giddy with this excitement—I had been within a hair's breadth of the grave—my youth only had saved me.

Would they bewail my sorrow—would they suggest a thought or plan? No, the letters were addressed to Lynnwood. In their minds I had settled there again, as if nothing had happened.

In any case, how could they help me—who could help me?"

Mrs. Barton went out of the room—that was right. I wanted the renewal of my sorrow, and my exquisite in-inking of their love to come over me when I was alone. I opened and read:—

"MARY DE MI CORAZON!—Oh, what sorrow! I cannot believe that it is so. You so virtuous and beautiful, and to suffer so much. I love you, dear—does that sound sweet to you? It is all I can say to comfort you. Yes! we could not have loved more in happiness than we love in grief; could we, my sister? No, we are for ever united. I take care of him, and you like him to have me, do you not? He could not have come alone. I often ask him why *you* did not marry him, and he says to me, 'Querida! Mary is a strong, glorious woman; she will be a crown of pride to her husband. There is no one I admire so much, and she loves me, and I love her, as if our parents had been the same. But you suit me for a wife, my little girl; it is a luxury to me to have something weak to hold court upon; Mary could not be protected; you could not well do without it. So it is all right, my bride.' And I know you think so, Mary. How strange that our names should be the same—I, so foolish, to have a beautiful name like you. But I

was cold once and proud, I believe ; though you would not believe it, would you ? Ah, if I could tell you about that, it all seems so strange now, and wicked. I wish you knew how we lived, it would not be wrong to tell you what made Francisco's wife so happy as she is. He saved me. I did not know anything about happiness till he came ; and it was all so quick. He taught me how beautiful everything is. I must see you again. I will beg of Francisco to return to Europe in a few years. He will do so if I wish it. Receive the heart of her who desires to see you, and cannot see this day when we shall meet.

"MARIA DE LA VEGA."

It was a sweet, lovely letter in the original language—I wept at every line of it. How I loved her, and thanked God—He was merciful ! how different might have been the woman Francisco married.

"MY DEAREST MARY,—My little wife is writing a long letter. Why I call her little I cannot tell. When I first saw her, she was a tall girl. She must be so now, except by your side. She seems to me little, because she is tender. We are admirably mated, Mary ; she suits me ; I repose entirely in her ; I turn to her innocence and simplicity from the thoughts that distract,—and the tempest is quelled. It is astonishing how she has lived within herself ; her religious instructors could scarcely have influenced her, devoted as doubtless they were. It was the religion, not the teachers, that swayed her ; but what an escape she has had. You never told me what you thought of my bride, Mary ! But we had such trouble. I am very sorry for you, Mary. We talk of you continually, and lament your remaining behind. Last evening we were on deck watching the sun set. It set in a blaze of light, and the red reflection on the sea was something marvellous ; it was far more sublime than the usual sunset upon the ocean. Everybody came on deck to look at it. We wanted you by our side to have enjoyed the glory with us. But these things that torture us, they are of life, Mary. You would not go back again to the world of your youth. No—you will rise above affliction—you are equal to cope with trouble—you will neither faint nor die—I know you. And the shock past, I think I see you gird up your spirit—I can see that ; but I cannot see your way ;

but there is a path laid out for you, depend upon it. Let me hear about you. You will remember us, we shall remember you.—Your most affectionate

“FRANCISCO DE LA VEGA.”

I did not weep over this letter. I swept back my hair in consequence of it—I drew long breaths. He had said, “I should neither faint nor die.” When Mrs. Barton came back, I repeated portions of my letters to her; then she began speaking to me on another subject—the same as yesterday. She asked, was I prepared for a surprise? She had more to tell me of Mrs. Cameron’s illness. I looked, I suppose, very anxious,—she sighed and feared I should be long weak; “but we must go away from here, dearest,” she said, “into the fresh country breezes—they will restore health to you.”

“What were you going to tell me?” I said.

“Your papa brought Mrs. Cameron to London, a fortnight ago and more.”

“And papa never came to see me?” I exclaimed.

“My dear, your papa did visit you, but you were too ill to be told of it. He came and stood where I am standing now, and looked at you as you slept; the tears rolled down his cheeks to see you so worn and pale. It was not considered prudent that he should see you, excepting in that manner; but I can assure you he evinced the utmost tenderness, and bewailed the trouble consequent on these afflicting events.”

“Where is papa?” I exclaimed.

“Gone to Madeira, my dear,” replied Mrs. Barton.

“Gone to Madeira!” I repeated.

“My dear, they have sailed. Mrs. Cameron’s state of health admitted of no delay. The physicians had ordered her abroad immediately; and she did not return to Lynwood. Mr. Cameron went down for two days, to make the most hasty arrangements, and has left everything in the hands of my husband, until you, my dear, are there.”

“You amaze me, Mrs. Barton; and did papa leave no messages for me?”

“Indeed he did, dear; he expressed his wishes distinctly with respect to you, in a conversation I had with him just before he sailed; and when you desire it, I will repeat fully all that he commissioned me to say.”

I requested Mrs. Barton to do so without delay. Papa had desired that when my health would admit, I would, if I pleased, go to some sea-side place for its re-establishment (I shuddered at the thought of again seeing the sea—I saw it nightly); or that I would go down to Lynwood, where all was left as usual, within reach of the Priory, and unrecognized in the neighbourhood; or, if I preferred, I could immediately follow them to Madeira—where his wife was all in all to my father.

Nothing could be more considerate than these suggestions of my father's. I determined fully to consider them. It was a new and strange sensation, my present liberty. I was, however, greatly shocked when I contemplated the extent of Mrs. Cameron's illness. So recently a bride, and to be so afflicted as to render such immediate steps necessary.

I first decided that I should not go to Lynwood. The more I thought of that, the more I felt that unless I was strong enough for pride, I had better not go there. And I felt as if I did not know when strength would come to me again.

And wherefore should I move to the coast, where, of all others, the sights and sounds would irritate my brain?

And if I followed Mr. and Mrs. Cameron to Madeira, how could I bear to cross the waters on another track than where I would go? That was hardly to be thought of. And in that case, my father would be engrossed, thoroughly engrossed, by his wife. Their harmony was complete without me; with me, it would be incomplete. I pictured myself alone in that island.

What then should I do—where go? Mrs. Barton advised my returning with her to the Parsonage. She considered it almost due to myself, she said, to show my face at home; for strange rumours, the result of my incomprehensible conduct, it seemed, had been afloat. But on that Mrs. Barton touched very lightly.

"And, my dear child," she continued, "it does not follow, because you return to Lynwood, that you meet Mr. Edward Raymond. I should rather suppose you need be under no fear that *he* would willingly meet *you*."

*Notwithstanding* bodily weakness, I was ready to be in arms at both these expressions.

*I require to show my face at Lynwood ! No fear of Edward Raymond seeking me !*

I thought it early days for him to be indifferent and void me ; if he had loved me as I believed that he did, he had not yet forgotten me. And what was a cross-current to the stream of love ? Not that I desired to meet him ; not it wounded my vanity to suppose myself forgotten, or that he could resist the magnetism which would attract him back to me, if I were near.

I did not know that the blow struck home to the depths of his confidence in all human truth. It was not only that he had been insulted—it was that he was wrecked. Nothing could cancel that deed of desertion in an honourable mind like his. He might love me still with bitter tenderness, at his respect, his esteem, I had forfeited for ever. I should have seen that, if I had not been engrossed with that portion of my circumstances which lay deeper than he.

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## CHAPTER XX.

"Arise ; if the past detain you,  
 Her sunshine and storms forget ;  
 No chains so unworthy to hold you  
 As those of a vain regret ;  
 Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever ;  
 Cast her phantom arms away,  
 Nor look back, save to learn the lesson  
 Of a nobler strife to-day."

THE under-current ran strong and deep, and unceasingly ; and the anguish of my regrets at my severance from Francisco and his wife grew wilder each night and day. I was compelled to school myself to the memory that he had said, "I could rise above affliction." Yet there were moments, thus on, when the thought that the world was before me was a harm ; for I believed now that I should not die.

The untrodden trackless world ! My idea of it was very vague.

*I conceived the design of doing something which should*



bring me into the business of life. It was a weird imagination, and it grew into a conviction, and a resolution. I communicated what I felt to Mrs. Barton, who, to my immense surprise, did not combat it. I believe, indeed, she felt that any rise from the lethargy in which I then was, should be regarded with hope.

When she found also that I would not return home, she thought anything of the kind I meditated preferable to leaving me (as she must do, for the need for her at the Vicarage at length was peremptory) independent and unoccupied.

I was able now to go out of doors, and my original self was returning, though I was shocked at my own appearance, and felt no longer surprised at the looks of pity the very waiters of the hotel bestowed upon me. No doubt our drama had been thoroughly discussed.

I had all my life been accustomed to scribble all kinds of verse—the impulse had for years been irresistible. But that was but a flowery part of life—I did not turn to it, now I wanted business. What I needed was actual labour. How my hands trembled then—but they soon would be firmer. The weather was not sultry, although it was midsummer ;—the air daily invigorated me. But it was mental labour I wished. There was no occasion, at least, for the other. That could never fall to my lot—the toil of the body ;—so I thought then. I appeared to myself very far removed beyond the reach of toil ; but a condition of mind which promised peace by taking me out of myself was what there could be nothing to quarrel with.

Where should I find it ? I had never studied painting ; and if I had done, neither that nor the music in which I delighted would be more than a pleasure to me ; and it was more than pleasure I must have, to keep a rein upon me.

I took up a newspaper, which lay upon the table, in my room at the hotel. "The Times" was not so general then as now—we never saw it at Lynwood. I glanced carelessly down the columns, seeing nothing but Wanted ! wanted ! wanted ! Everything in the shape of a menial was wanted. Then I saw governesses wanted ! A thought ! *why should not I teach some children ?* Certainly, I ought *to be fitted.* Large sums had been expended upon masters,

an instructress for me ; that I knew. I certainly able to teach—then teach I would.

how to set about it ! The novelty of the idea, re-effort, already raised my spirits. I called in Mrs. to my aid. She was startled ; but she did not dis-  
 a. She had expected that I should write ; but she t been able to solve the difficulty of my meeting with  
 amiable and excellent a family of strangers as I enter, and in which she could leave me ; and the  
 t of all those arrangements which appeared so singular portant to a young lady in my position, caused her to  
 her opinion that I ought not to remain away from od. However, consulted upon my new idea, she was  
 onsiderate ; she thought it would take me more out self, and therefore would be a better thing than  
 ship, for which I have since felt assured that she had doubt but that I must be fully qualified. She, like  
 could have looked upon that path only as a garden s, of which any of ordinary gifts might pluck ; or she  
 with the preference of friendship, have had too high ion of my attainments.

two inexperienced persons commenced answering f the promising advertisements. It was very ridicu-  
 1 appearance to see ourselves writing these grave sto- es for a governess's situation for Miss Cameron of  
 od Hall. Two months ago, it certainly would have mon-  
 strous notion. Then I was about to be married, o have an elegant home of my own ; now I was  
 ig, as a dependent, upon self-imposed tasks among  
 ers.

ust not linger too long upon my details—I have  
 r lingered too long ; but over the first great “ days of  
 fe ” it is necessary to linger. I met with the princi-  
 f a ladies' school among my correspondents, who  
 l twenty miles from London, and who needed an  
 h teacher. I liked the style of their letters better  
 ny others I received ; I felt quite elated at the success  
 plan, and I decided to go there. I would not permit  
 Barton to accompany me ; I would enter upon this  
 scene alone. I took leave of my friend at the close of  
 ie having spent many weeks with me in nursing and

restoring me ; and I felt, when I parted with her, how impossible it was that I should ever be able to repay her. But she had been Lillie's mother, and it was not painful to be obligated to her.

I arrived at the orderly residence where I was going to live, for some months at least—Lilbury Park ; it was a good house, with about thirty-five acres of land round it, which had caused the Misses Ellmore to give their abode the name of Lilbury Park. There was a pretty lodge at the entrance from the public road, with an avenue of elms down the drive—at least, so I was informed shortly ; not having seen more than five trees upon my left, and one or two upon my right, I had not admired *the avenue*, as I found it was expected I had done when I alighted. The gravel drive I knew was portioned by a kind of iron fencing, leaving just sufficient space for one carriage to pass along it ; and that was an eyesore to me—giving the whole green a contracted look.

But the sight of fields was refreshing to me. I had been pining for a sight of them in my London hotel, whence we could only get into country which did not look at all like country to me.

The Misses Ellmore were maiden sisters. My private impression of their age, and which I found was a pretty accurate one, was that they were at that time nearly seventy years old ; but they were hale women, and very good-looking for that age.

Miss Ellmore was a small lady, the very pink of neatness ; she was a miniature in all items of her personal appearance. Her little bright eyes, delicate nose, and pursed-up mouth were all in perfect unison ; while her voice was a shrill ringing voice, which decidedly little people often have. She wore her false hair in short ringlets, with a cap of some smart small flowers surmounting it. Her hands were tiny, upon which she wore a number of handsome rings. She dressed in black silk, and wore always a chemisette of point lace, with studs at the bosom ; gold chain, and bracelets. Miss Ellmore's personal appearance never varied.

*Miss Lucretia Ellmore was one year her sister's junior. She was invariably called Miss Lucretia. It must have*

given her an unpleasant sensation of seniority to hear herself called Miss Ellmore, for she always announced to strangers who so addressed her that she was the younger of the sisters. Miss Lucretia was extremely stout—an affliction of which she was sensible, and for which I sincerely pitied her. She must have been once a very handsome woman ; she had now an honest, open expression of countenance, but with such a loud voice and boisterous manner, that she was a terror to weak nerves. Her extraordinary dress was particularly becoming to her. She also wore black robes, but their texture varied according to Miss Lucretia's engagements. She was of middle height, and these dresses swept round her ample figure with no bad grace ; they were always left unfastened from the waist to the ground, exhibiting petticoats of different colours and kinds, as the occasion might be. She wore a little book-muslin apron, with a hem and two tucks, and required three clean ones in the course of every day. The body of her dress, left open at the bosom, displayed an enormous pendant, which always hung round her neck ; while a large watch was fastened at her side—charms, &c., with it—and the whole was fixed by the aid of a gold cable attached to a brooch below the pendant, which was also of immense proportions, and which she told me, on my first introduction to her, was a present from her dear friend Major Pierson, who had sent it from Madagascar. Her very brown braids were arranged in the nicest fashion ; and she always wore bracelets of precious stones—these latter also were presents, but from whom I never heard. Miss Lucretia frequently sighed over them in the presence of the young ladies ; from which fact the elder girls declared their belief that Miss Lucretia had been disappointed.

I cannot do justice to my reception from the two ladies. They embraced me with great demonstrations of affection ; they declared they had never met with a lady who suited them so admirably as I should do ; they told me I should be as happy with them as the summer days were long ; they asked a variety of questions about myself, my family, and my native place, with which I was very much disgusted, and *which I answered briefly*. They then ordered the servants *upstairs with my luggage* (the pupils had not any of them

arrived), and desired that refreshment might be prepared for me. Then giving me a decisive pat upon the shoulder, Miss Lucretia bade me follow "her maids" to my room, and she left me in the hall, re-entering their sitting-room, banging the door behind her. She had evidently divested herself of me for the present ; and I heard her voice in its highest key, but not in an angry tone, and felt the reverberation of her portly step as she trod over the floor. Their sitting-room was very well furnished, and was a good-sized room, and the entrance-hall was spacious for the size of the house, although I did not think so at the time, you may imagine; for Lynwood Hall was my home, and I had come from the hotel in St. James's Street. No, I felt a contraction each way I turned for the first few days of my residence at Lilbury Park. But I followed the two servants upstairs.

They mounted two flights, I in their van, and stopped at a place in the turrets. I thought they were leaving my luggage there for some purpose unknown ; and as I wished to unpack it, I desired my boxes might be taken at once to my room. They stared with a mixture of impertinence and condolence.

"This was my sleeping-room."

"This my sleeping-room !"

I could only stand upright in one portion of it, for the wall sloped on either side to within a yard of the floor ; and the apartment altogether would measure about nine feet by twelve. There was a little window (with an iron stanchel), which had no blind. I had some difficulty to believe that the press I saw, narrow, and almost upon the ground, would answer the purpose of a bed, with its blue-checked quilt, and nothing in the shape of furniture. Beside the bed was one chair, a deal table by the wall, with a newspaper upon it, and a glass upon a nail above, a trifle larger than the one in my dressing-case. A washing apparatus of the scantiest kind, and pegs behind the door, completed my survey, with the exception of the floor, upon which there was no carpet.

The servants had gone down ; I stood in the midst of my domain, my boxes uncorded.

*The prospect was certainly novel. Where was I going to put my velvet mantle, and a parasol, which was new*

and pretty? Were they to be folded upon the floor? The ideas presented to me were so ridiculous, that I yielded to an uncontrollable impulse, and laughed immoderately.

I pushed open the window. The stanchel was only a presumptive one, I found, for it moved with my touching it; and I immediately pulled it out of its place, when I saw that I could replace it. Growing entertained, I fetched the chair, and the prospect outside was so inviting, when I could see above the stone framework beyond the window, that I could not resist the temptation to step outside, on the leads, to look over the turrets.

There was a magnificent view;—all the fine country on that side of London. Woods, villages, meadows, lay smiling beneath me; but the sight of nature's beauty and loftiness made me feel very much indisposed to creep back into my cell. However, it was necessary. I was in the act of re-entering my apartment, when I heard steps on the stairs; and I had only just descended upon the floor again, when a head was put in at the door, and somebody very pleasantly said, "Ah! I thought you were all alone, and I came to help you; should you not like to unpack?"

This freedom from ceremony grated upon me a little; but I was decidedly in a dilemma about the unpacking.

I said, "I thank you; perhaps you will have the goodness to inform me where I am to put everything I have."

"Oh!" she said, "you must keep them in your boxes, to be sure, till we see if there are any drawers to spare, when the girls are all back; if they don't use them all, that is. If there is not the full number of pupils, we may, perhaps, get a set of drawers; but it is doubtful whether we shall."

"And may I ask, who are you?" I said.

She laughed. "I am the English governess."

So, I thought, am I; for that was the term by which my vocation had been called.

"I hear the second-class lessons, English and French," continued my informant, "and correct the exercises, and I don't know what beside—everything, and run about and keep order when I can."

I was perplexed. "But are not the young ladies well-behaved?"

"Oh! they are all very well sometimes; it depends upon

how many troublesome ones there are. Last half-year they were not so very bad. Mademoiselle kept them down a good deal ; but she has left, for her mother is very ill ; she has been ill a long time ; she lives at Bonn. Mademoiselle would never have left her, for she has no other daughter ; but they were wretchedly poor, and Mademoiselle could not afford to stay at home : it was very shocking to see how unhappy she was when she got her letters."

I was very much shocked, too, at this simple tale of suffering. What that poor girl must have endured ! How dreadful must poverty be !

"But do not the Misses Ellmore sustain a part in the proceedings ?" I asked, recurring to the school.

"I should rather think they do. You won't find Miss Lucretia behindhand. Ah, you should hear her storm !—but you will, soon enough. The girls don't care about Miss Ellmore, but they are rather afraid of Miss Lucretia. But the girls are treated well on the whole ; to be sure, they don't learn much ; neither book knowledge, morality, nor religion, as William says, from what I tell him ; but their bodies are well taken care of, and that, you know, goes a long way with the parents. And they get them on with music and the showy accomplishments ; and it is astonishing how well the pupils have got married who have been educated at Lilbury Park—and there is a great deal in that. And they have a number of Indian children ; I mean the daughters of officers out in India, who must send their children to England to be educated ; and that makes the school notorious. Whenever any one comes, the Miss Munroes are sent for—they are the two showiest girls in the school. They are the youngest daughters of an officer whose family have all been sent over here—these are going out next year. They are nice girls ; it is a thousand pities they were left in the care of the Ellmores. Cora— isn't it a beautiful name ?—only it sounds North-American Indian,—she is the eldest. She is considered a very fine girl. She has such a noble heart, too ; she is the favourite in the school. And Lillah—she is about fourteen, two years younger than her sister—such a great girl, and very pretty indeed, *only a little vain at present* ; but she's a dear warm-hearted girl. *I like these two girls the best in the school, but there*

re others very nice. Now, however, since you do not unpack, and nobody comes about the dinner, I'll run down and see if it's ready ; you and I are to dine alone, and I'm sure you must be hungry."

So she rattled on, and I was both interested and elated,—everything was so new, for I had never seen a school before—and at the same time, a little anxious. Where had I got to ?

My companion teacher came back directly, and we went downstairs arm in arm. We had a great deal of conversation during our dinner, which was concluded by her saying, "My name is Eliza Dawson ; and now what is yours ?"

I informed her.

"Cameron ! Cameron ! why isn't it a Scotch name ? and you haven't got the brogue. I have heard William say that no Scotch people ever lose their accent, let them go where they may."

"I think one's national accent is retained by most people."

"But are you Scotch ?"

"No, I am not : my ancestors were born in Scotland ; but three generations have married and resided in England ; therefore we must consider ourselves indisputably mingled with the English now."

"Oh yes ; William is generally right."

"And, pray, who is William ?" I could not resist inquiring.

"William ! oh, he is my brother, my eldest brother, you know. I owe everything to him ; he has brought me up, and been very kind to me. He is very clever ; he is headmaster of a college in London."

I have given a sufficiently lengthy specimen of one inmate of Lilbury Park. She was really a very amiable girl ; but that did not prevent my being seriously annoyed, when I arrived at the horrifying discovery that Miss Dawson was to share with me that little pent-up sleeping-room.

I decided to make mention of this as an arrangement which I disapproved ; but I had no opportunity of seeing Miss Ellmore—she was continually engaged, I heard ; and my companion was quite disconcerted at the idea of my *king an audience* for the purpose I intended. She assured



me the Miss Ellmores would never like me again, if I made a complaint about their regulations, and advised me one for all, as she said, to make myself comfortable as best I could, if I intended to stay at Lilbury, which she hoped I did, as she and I would be friends. It would not suit my plan to have to seek another abode, immediately this was provided. "No," I thought, "I have come here, and here for six months I will remain;" but I had been only a few hours in the house when I heartily wished I had not made a descent upon it.

I had not seen the old ladies since my arrival, nor did I catch a glimpse of either until the middle of the next day, when the pupils began to arrive; and the first step being lost about the bed-room, it then went on, and nobody had the benefit of my reasonable objections; and I henceforth had not a moment alone from rising in the morning to lying down at night—therefore I had no solitary meditations. The pupils came in at intervals during that week,—by the Sunday all had arrived. The days had been very monotonous to me, I hardly knew how I should bear my penance, for already my position was that in my own mind. I wrote to Francisco,—as I was told that when school commenced I should not have a moment to write a letter,—of course omitting all particulars, announcing my present residence; I had so much to say to them, that it was easy to dispense with detail about my own proceedings. And that first week I heard from Madeira that the voyagers had arrived in safety there, and that Mrs. Cameron was better. I also wrote to Mrs. Barton, giving her general descriptions, and anticipated with the utmost anxiety the solace of a letter from her. What an important person dear Mrs. Barton had become in my narrowed circle!

On the first Sunday I felt an overpowering weight in the atmosphere around me; but I was brave—I would not let my spirits give way. I had to remember that Francisco had said "I should neither faint nor die." Having put my shoulder to the wheel, I would not withdraw it; but I began to think my new scheme had been rather a hasty whim. But it was not such a vast space of time, I reasoned,—six months, six months!

*On the following morning my business duly commenced*

not quarrel with my avocations ; but I feared I should feel with the manner of them. I found them, however, what different to those I had anticipated as the duties of the English teacher." Miss Ellmore taught English, as well as French, to the first classes ; Miss Dawson took the second. The young children were instructed by a very good teacher, who had never been " out," as they called it, from home. She was there only for a time, owing to some re-arrangements at home caused by a sister's peculiarities. Her parents were people in very good circumstances, and, of course, it had been her own choice to come where she pleased.

Like me, she was taken by surprise, and I was compelled to console her under her difficulties, as in my own mind, I thought that Christmas would soon come ; though, as it was now the second week in August, it was at a sufficiently serious distance.

And do you think, Miss Cameron, all the horses in the stable could drag me back again here ? No, you may depend on it they could not." Miss Orr thus freely expressed herself on her first acquaintanceship. She was a very warm-hearted girl of sixteen or seventeen. I became fond of her, and she was one of my staunchest friends.

There was a musical governess—a talented, superior woman ; extremely agreeable, and possessing a magnificent contralto voice. She brought on her pupils wonderfully ; she was not the strongest health, which caused her to be peculiarly attacked with innuendoes of the " misfortune it was for educational ladies should have ill-health,—devolving so much anxiety upon the principals, lest the training of the young ladies be neglected." However, Miss La Trobe continued no lessons in consequence of her occasional indisposition ; nor could she have been wanting in energy, owing from the effects of her teaching. And after ten years stationary at the piano, with the exception of the excursions given to dinner and tea, it was not surprising to find some fatigue. But neither of the Misses Ellmore ever fell ill during my stay with them ; and illness in a teacher was in their eyes the most grievous offence.

These three ladies, with myself and twenty-six pupils, composed the establishment at Lilbury Park.

## CHAPTER XXI.

For an Indian isle she shapes her way,  
With constant mind, both night and day ;  
But list ! a low and moaning sound,  
As if it calls the ship along—  
And now it reigns above, around.

WILSON.

I WAS the recipient of incidental occupations, as Miss Dawson said she was. I gave musical lessons to the younger children, and taught a little drawing ; all the clames—English and French—read to me every day, and I overlooked the arithmetic ; but I found it impossible to resolve my work into order. I could never fix an hour for any of the duties, and this to my temperament was exceedingly trying. Moreover, after the first fortnight, I found myself a person of so little importance that I received very desultory treatment at the hands of Miss Lucretia. I think she took a dislike to me very shortly after my arrival, for she certainly annoyed me in various ways, far more than her sister, although generally, throughout the house, Lucretia was preferred.

I was no sooner seated to take a class than I was asked what I was doing—what I intended by making that arrangement—why I did not do so-and-so—"there must be order and regularity, and there should be, at Lilbury Park !" Then the girls would file off, and some ciphering be brought to me, no matter what it was, so that it varied from what I proposed. And we would go on pretty quietly for a quarter of an hour, when another grievance would probably arise, and it would be, "Upon my word, Miss Cameron, I do wish you would act a little differently—in my life I never saw anything to equal this ! *Miss Ellmore*—*Miss Ellmore* ! do have the goodness to speak ; don't leave all the care of this large establishment upon my hands ! *I really am not equal to it—I am surprised at you, Sarah Anne !*"

"There's nothing the matter, Miss Lucretia," Miss Ellmore would generally reply, in the blandest and most gravating tone; "everybody is as happy as they can be, you will only leave them so."

"Upon my word, Miss Ellmore!" And then Miss Lucretia would rise from her chair, her eyes literally gleaming—the girls always declared they emitted sparks at these men; and there would be a perfect torrent, all the snare removed from my shoulders to those of Miss Ellmore. could not be surprised that I so frequently had to interfere between children quarrelling, who were sisters, since it was the example set before them by their elders.

Miss Lucretia's temper was something frightful; it was instantly convulsing the household, and must have exercised a deleterious effect upon herself physically, notwithstanding she lived several years after I knew her. It would break out upon the most trivial occasions, drawing no line between thoughtless carelessness and what I considered *ce*. That is not too harsh a title for some conduct I witnessed there.

And what, it will be asked, could possibly have happened to me, that I was tamely submitting myself to a hundred lights, and numerous insults, each succeeding day; exerting scarcely a power of my own, and moving down this extraordinary current with no resistance against an intolerable tide? The fact was this, that in presence of the pupils I was sufficiently mistress of myself to make no responses unbecoming in their teacher. I must confess, upon some occasions, I uttered a few characteristic words, when I believe Miss Lucretia was so appalled by my temerity, that she could make no reply. I looked up at her face at one of these times, and its expression was so intensely ludicrous, that my propriety of demeanour was almost upset. I did not venture a second glance; but from that time I knew she had a feeling of intense detestation to myself. My services, however, were requisite during the next few months; therefore, each to suit our convenience, she and I resided together, cherishing those mutual sentiments. After a time I did not observe much that went on—I certainly rose above all insults; *or what were they to me?* I could rid myself of them *any way I pleased*. I fulfilled my duties scrupulously, not only

those which the Ellmores prescribed, but others at the expense of my conscience—soothing the child who judged unjustly,—reasoning with her who was improving of good—reproving what I beheld which was wrong—urging my fellow-teachers to bear. It did not signify to me who would have done with them at the close of the term in what manner the Miss Ellmores behaved to me; but those who were systematically governesses, it was a hard thing to say. Changes are ever dubious; the girl who sacrifices one position may meet with another more objectionable still. I had heard from dear Mrs. Barton, who wrote most affectionately. She was my only correspondent in England. After dwelling slightly on my affairs, she informed me that at last Cranston had given up the church. He had studied for it, because such was the wish of his father, but he had never been able to feel that it was the vocation to which he was called. His taste for painting, developed at an early age, had long been a passion with him, and he had laid the matter before his parents in this way,—which left their indulgence very much to be desired. Should he proceed with his studies at Cambridge and devote himself scrupulously to the dictates of his conscience in following out the profession to which he had been designed, but which was not to his taste, because he did not feel that he was fitted for its solemnities? He stood with trembling upon the threshold of an office which, to a serious mind, could not be mocked; it must be passed or not, resolution, if passed at all, and hereafter there should be no looking back. Or would the parents, by whom his welfare was duly weighed, remove the barrier of their own decision which precluded him from a fair field upon which he might gaze longingly? In perspective promise, in a wide point of view, there was not much difference in the two courses of life. The Bartons were by no means rich, having but little property independent of the living of Lynnhaven which did not afford a large income. As was natural under the circumstances, the parents left this important decision to Cranston to make. They did this with more regret that they allowed their son to see. Cranston, thankful and relieved, hesitated no more to fling away his books; he said *adieu* to Cambridge with fiery impatience, feeling how many years had thus been spent which were wide from the

ich he disposed himself now. He ran down to Lyn-  
for a few days, and, Mrs. Barton told me, sent many  
messages to me ; but he could not understand my  
nents at all. He was now in London, where his  
ar feared he would work far too hard, previously to his  
abroad—for he had chosen to study in a continental  
l. I thought Cranston would have written to me, but  
as too thoroughly engrossed at this early period of his  
dedication even to find time for one epistle. And  
Barton did not mention the Raymonds, which dis-  
tented me—I longed to hear of Lucy, and I was curious  
Edward.

heard too from Francisco in the month of September.  
was a small black seal upon the envelope, which made  
most wild with indefinable dread, and, in defiance of all  
tions, I tore open my letter, the first few lines of  
were in such a gay strain that I was reassured, and  
nbered how careless gentlemen always are in such  
s. I put away my precious letter, but not before Miss  
tia had visited a torrent of invectives upon me for my  
ustificable conduct."

ere was breakfast to be taken, and it seemed inter-  
ble before I could steal a moment for my letter ; then I  
unning upstairs, when I heard shrieks from Miss  
tia for "Miss Cameron ! Miss Cameron !" And I was  
tched to hear a returned French verb, which ought to  
been said by a poor little girl before breakfast, who had  
confounded by surrounding disorder. It was right  
I should hear the lesson, therefore I accorded instant  
tion to it, not, however, without my chest heaving and  
res filling with hot tears ; for that was the period at  
all were usually sent into the grounds for exercise,  
was only a species of small tyranny which made me  
noment's victim.

ith two girls on either side of me, chattering and  
ing, I was glad of my only opportunity, while pacing  
d down the drive, to read the long beautiful letter of  
isco. There was no inclosure from Maria this time : her  
e was explained, for, after the first burst of eloquent  
t their arrival at his birthplace, where they had landed  
*inight, among thronging friends, the many relatives,*

and their acquaintances, all eager to welcome with demonstrations of sincere regard the returning—only Anglicized to suit a purpose, and for a time time was happily past,—Francisco told me in a few his pleasure and satisfaction on his arrival in that and he went on to say, “Maria was not destined to festivities into which I found myself instantly plunged and tidings awaited her. We got news on our land the French ship *La Reine*, in which the Señor and Montrillo embarked immediately after our marriage, been wrecked off one of the West-India islands, & of her passengers had perished; among them, sad to father and mother of Maria, who is inconsolable. I know in what way to comfort her—she weeps in. It is a calamity for my poor little wife. I may as feel the shock of their untimely fate with great but I am so inundated with throngs of people, that little leisure to dwell upon it. It is a very important in many respects, for Maria’s fortune is large, received a small portion only on the occasion of marriage. Pardon this hurried letter, written unconsciously. How quickly grief has come to my little wife—it will hardly permit me to share a tithe of it with her. I have no near relatives since this bereavement has occurred. Here the letter broke off abruptly, and if it had continued so, I should have been unable to have finished the rest of it then, for at that moment I beheld Miss I figure in the hall door-way, beckoning with her hand frantically for the return of the young ladies themselves to the house. I never could understand, subject was to such continuous contortions, how Miss Lucretia retained to strangers the frank, pleasant expression certainly wore when necessary.

I put into my pocket the epistle which contained and which stirred every depth of my heart—that which I should have shared; the reception given to me by de la Vega at the hands of an impetuous and generous of whose manners and habits the cold natives of cannot form an idea; their expenditure, their operation *their excitability*. And Maria in sorrow—such sorrow—and I might have been able to console her

dreadful circumstance—how I longed for further particulars—how I wondered with what feelings, exactly, Franco's wife mourned for her parents!—she who had told me, innocently, that she never knew happiness until he came.

But I must have done with these thoughts, foreign to my employments; I must be as immersed as was needful in all that mass of business which awaited me in the school-room, where it was an utter impossibility, treated as I was by the principal in public, to maintain order. My authority was no case upheld; therefore it could carry very little weight with it. I did more from mere personal regard, which some of these intractables felt for me, than by any other means; but it was an office by no means a sinecure, as my lungs told me at the end of a few months. And this miserably-treated individual, who notwithstanding preserved her spirits, and a sensible amount of cheerfulness, and who was at times artily amused, at others heartily sick of this life—was *Mary Cameron*—whose temper in her indulgent home had been the law of the household, which dependents never thought of questioning, her father quietly agreed with, and which had maintained its authority in opposition to a step-mother? Was this the *Mary Cameron* who lived once at *Pinewood Hall*, and who passed thence by one towering act the abnegation of home and country, and every sacred tie, and had been retained within this hemisphere more by a conscientious superstition than by dread for the ire of her mother, to whom that mighty decision, which might have tended over her lifetime, had been the work of a few hours only?



## CHAPTER XXII.

It is the same good honest glance  
I loved in times gone by,  
Ere the kind old friendly feelings  
Had ever brought one sigh.

SWAIN.

IN October, a lady came to Lilbury Park with two little wards, with whom, while they were educated, she wished to reside. I mention her coming simply because it was a break in the monotony. She was considered an eccentric person; I did not see much of her—what little I saw I liked. She kept very much aloof from the Ellmores, not being able, I suppose, to accommodate herself to them; and she had little opportunity of exchanging many civilities, to say no more, with any one else in the house. The Ellmores were tenacious of her addressing either teacher or pupil; but they paid her every attention, doubtless from the most disinterested motives. She must have felt it an extraordinary life that upon which she had entered; I have often wondered whether she remained. Her charges were interesting and intelligent children, of eight and eleven years old, whom it was a pleasure to me to teach: they had evidently been carefully trained, and they were passionately attached to their cousin, as she was to them.

When they had been some time located at Lilbury Park, and my time of probation was drawing to a close, I went into her room one evening, to which, if we chanced to meet on the staircase, or in any other spot for a moment, she had frequently invited me; and I found those three sitting in the twilight, with their arms round each other's necks, and tears upon all their faces. I believe the children were consoling, or attempting to console, some grief which they innocently aggravated. I closed the door, and withdrew as *silently as I entered*—I could not break in upon them; but *I was very much affected by that little episode; and when,*

with the rest, those three came in, and also took their seats at the tea-table, I looked at them earnestly. Doubtless they came from some happy home whence circumstances had driven them: no wonder they pined in that uncongenial atmosphere.

Meantime my tidings from Madeira had been constantly varying—sometimes hopeful, sometimes hopeless; the fluctuations of that delusive malady were too painful to particularize. I gathered from papa's accounts that Mrs. Cameron must be sinking, since she did not recover. There had been no mention of their return, of course, at that season of the year; therefore, one fortnight before the close of our term and my servitude, I was thrown into a state of consternation by a few hurried lines from papa, to announce that Mrs. Cameron insisted upon being brought home; she was not feeling so well, and they were leaving the island as quickly as they could get off; concluding with the tenderest expressions of pleasure in the prospect of so soon seeing me again, and fearing that my health must have suffered by the unconscionable fancy which I had taken into my head.

I had made no definite arrangement as to what I would do when I arrived in London after my emancipation; I had not been able to realize the fact of my enlargement until it should be accomplished. But I had supposed I must naturally go to Lynwood thence, although that idea was fraught with mixed feeling. Mrs. Barton had never told me anything relating to the Raymonds,—not their names had been traced by her pen; and having more than once made inquiries, my pride would not permit a repetition on my part. Seven, eight months had gone by since I had last seen Edward, and no word of him or of Lucy had reached me. From Lima, I had long letters from Maria, with postscripts of Francisco's; and they ceased to give me the pain they did at first: my resolution had had the effect for which it was embraced; and Time, the great restorer, had been busy. And with all the pleasure I anticipated in my departure from the roof of the Miss Ellmores, there was regret also; there were many in that singular household who had called forth my kindest feelings. I heard several atrocious stories about the Ellmores' past conduct, which made me wonder how they had possibly contrived to keep their school

together. People said two of their teachers had died, after a seven years' duration, the elder from sheer bodily exertion, the other of grief for her sister's shocking end, and pupils had been most injudiciously treated in cases of serious illness. One young lady had died; but it is so impossible for persons to judge of the heart of an establishment by the mere externals, which are, of course, all they can see. So the school remained, and those two women, on the brink of the grave, with their excellent residence, handsome appointments, and plausible representations, were suffered to have the charge of youth, with their evil temperaments and thoroughly bad system; for Miss Ellmore, though much more guarded than her sister, was, I think, the generous disposition of the two. They exercised selfishness, and neglect, to call each by no harsher yet they were considered, generally, *highly respectable*.

Miss Orr did not share the scenes of the last week. Miss Lucretia accused a pair of white silk stockings, which had a hole in her drawer; and as this occurred at the school, very unqualified language was used, and she declared her determination to do as she did, to the excessive surprise of the principals. How it was that, as her friends did not sue Miss Lucretia, I have never been able to ascertain. She bid her good bye, and so, I suppose, she flocked round her with the usual crowd, and breathing no very angry words. I went down to "receive" her departure. I was told that she would "take their money."

The little old man, who had defrauded me, was the most imperious of men, and many a time as clear as crystal in my mind.

Two

it was, I had not preserved them, not being initiated into the prudence required by poor governesses. The next morning I bade adieu to Lilbury Park, its grievances, and the kind hearts that had cheered me for five months.

I parted from Cora and Lillah Munroe with much regret. It saddened me to see those two girls made up for the market; their beauty, and accomplishments and sweetness, only so many points to procure them a distinguished marriage. But I heard that their parents were of high family, and very much attached to their children; therefore I hope that system would be less destructive to those dear girls' happiness, than it is in general.

And Flora and Ellen Morrison, I was sorry to leave them. They were sweet girls, the only children of excellent people not living in the immediate neighbourhood of Lilbury. I believe them to have been most solicitous for the welfare of their daughters, and could have had no knowledge of the persons to whom they intrusted them.

The elder came six months alone, to prepare her to support the higher spirit of her sister, who, of the most affectionate and charming disposition, was a stranger to restraint, and whose exuberant spirits bade fair to embroil their owner every hour. The gentle-tempered ever pass so much more smoothly through life. Ellen's sensitiveness would feel a thousand stings where Flora would be insensible of one; yet Flora was a very clever girl, and both were thoroughly high-principled.

I never saw or heard of them after I bade them adieu, when my bonnet and shawl were donned to quit Lilbury, but they are among my pleasant recollections of Lilbury. I had spoken more with Flora Morrison than with any other young lady; her manners were very sweet, and her heart very warm.

I was seated once more in a railway-carriage. What a tumultuous feeling came over me. Not until I arrived in London, however, did I feel myself "Miss Cameron" again. Once upon the platform among the crowd and busy life round me, I became myself. "Miss Cameron" had been in a dormant state; she was now revived—the phoenix had come to life. And there is no doubt that the penance I had undergone had been highly beneficial. Except by some such

means, I never should have felt the elasticity of mind and body with which I found myself once more free, after the imprisonment. And though driving along again in the streets of London, I could have imagined that those months had never been, that it was still so soon after Francisco's going, and my parting from Edward, that my heart ached afresh, yet there was hope—the hope of action stretched before me—action once more; and I was impatient to take another step into the future, down which I could only see two little weeks, for at the end of that time they would have arrived from Madeira.

In London dear Mrs. Barton met me. Her husband had business there, and she accompanied him, to have the pleasure of meeting me; and truly her reception of me was that of a mother. When she heard the surprising intelligence that my father and Mrs. Cameron were returning, she agreed to remain with me until they should arrive, which afforded me great pleasure. Mr. Barton returned alone, and I gave my dear friend a full and particular account of my late domesticity. She was filled with amazement that I should have persisted to remain: "But dear Mary," she said, "you have had little or no time to brood over yourself, you have seen a variety of character, and you have filled a post which might have been less ably filled by another than yourself, though you feel your influence has been slight. If you have spoken or acted to the benefit of a single person during your stay there, your time has not been spent in vain."

The joy it was to me to sit again with Mrs. Barton, added to all other luxuries—to hear her familiar voice, in addition to the every-day appointments which are natural to a lady! I really felt wild with pleasure—I was quite myself again now, but I hope a little improved.

Who that is a wanderer has not felt what it is to be once more understood? When they among whom you are cast, see none of the hidden springs, and misinterpret all their effects; when you feel the injustice you do to yourself, the erroneous impressions you convey, yet for the life of you you cannot shake off the miserable lethargy; and you, who were once so proud and bright in the strength of your youth, your admiring friends, your entrancing happiness, are yet

sed by an impertinent passer-by (a fly—a speck, whom gone days you would not even have seen) “very un-  
-sting”—“quite an oddity!” Have they risen up again  
clasped in old embraces, to hear once more fond tones,  
re they grown wild with the rapture of a home-breath  
even though it be but the glimpse of a moment, and  
never be granted more? I was removed from this

state as yet; but these will not say I exaggerate the  
gs of which I partook in part, when I met again my  
al friend, without a change in appearance or voice,  
less in her heart, and bearing about her clothes the  
air of Lynwood—beloved, beautiful Lynwood,—from  
for a brief space I had driven myself, but where I  
I soon be in peace again. For if every one despised  
because, having no mother, I had committed a great  
for which I had tasted punishment—and both were  
obliterated, though all had occurred in the space of  
(short months), I could shut myself into the rooms  
rounds of the house where I was born; I need never  
them except to go to the church, where, at all events,  
uld be free. But I had fewer sad thoughts than  
al ones. I longed to see my father again, from whom  
never before been separated; and, since Mrs. Barton  
I not speak to me of the Raymonds, I should wait now  
on the spot, I *must* hear of them again.

kind friend thought me looking wan and weary, but in  
respects she was delighted, she said, to find me as I was.  
ceived my letters from the west coast, and I devoured  
contents as usual; and, in my re-entrance into my  
al state of being, these letters affected me greatly.  
reading them, I felt the past afresh. Yes! there  
chords in my heart which would not bear a touch, so  
lly susceptible were they still, under a familiar hand.  
tamed, but not subdued. The fever was past, but  
she remained. As I read and re-read that letter from  
isco’s wife, touching upon the tenderest incidents, I was  
to toss my arms into the air once more, and rebel at  
te.

a. Barton and myself went to see a few picture-gal-  
(Cranston was now in Belgium), and a musical enter-  
-ent to which ladies might venture alone. And on two

Sundays we went to metropolitan churches,—where I had never been before ; for previously to my going to Lillbury I had not thought myself strong enough to attend a church. Hitherto I had seen nothing of London : my old friend and I took long drives into the country round, and scrutinized the carriages and their occupants in Hyde Park ; and descending to walk, we admired the equestrians. We saw his majesty's carriage pass along Rotten Row, the only carriage allowed there. I had not seen the king before, and I was very much pleased to have a glimpse of royalty. With the exception of the eventful night at the Italian Opera the previous summer, I had seen none of the attractions of the metropolis, and as our recreations were necessarily limited by the fact of our being alone, it was reserved for a later period of my life to see and know London.

Three weeks had elapsed since the receipt of my father's letter, and we were in daily expectation of hearing of the arrival of the voyagers. I began to feel a little nervous at the idea of meeting Mrs. Cameron again after all that had passed.

We could hear nothing of the *Southern Belle* during another week, and we were feeling anxious in consequence. It occurred to me to inquire if the vessel had been heard of at Lloyd's. She had not been heard of at Lloyd's upon the day we sent there, but on the following morning they knew, and at night all readers of the *Times* knew—what ?

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

“The wind that blew upon the sea,  
Fierce and free,  
Cast the bark upon the shore,  
Whence it sail'd the night before  
Full of hope and glee ;  
And the cry of pain and death  
Was but a breath  
Through the wind that roar'd upon the sea.”

MRS. BARTON fell back in her chair, for she was reading the *Evening Mail*, and she saw at a glance that a catastrophe the most awful had fallen upon me. I also was aware of it by the manner in which she grasped the paper ; and

regardless of her condition, I possessed myself of it, and read every word of the paragraph which had met her eye. I felt her make the effort to recover herself when she saw what I was doing. I remember the paper falling from my hands, but nothing more—for *I was an orphan!* It never came upon my mind that there was any mistake; I took it for granted the tale was true, as indeed it was. Not so Mrs. Barton; she was assured there was some mistake;—it might be another vessel;—it could not be the *Southern Belle*; or if it were the *Southern Belle*, my father could not be on board of her. She was incapable of realizing the possibility of such a calamity. She must have spoken to me incessantly, though I did not hear her. I knew other persons were in the room, and that letters were written and messengers despatched to Lynwood vicarage—to Lloyd's most probably. Ah, no! that place would be closed. No matter—something was done: but it made no difference to me; I lay there stricken down again. My spirit had rebounded from the last struggle; my chastisement had not sufficed—and this was dealt to me. Oh! my father, my father!

When, a long time afterwards, Mr. and Mrs. Barton and myself wore mourning, and still we were in the same room in that boarding-house in Spring Gardens, I read again the paragraph which was so fatal. I understood graphically how all had been. The *Southern Belle* had gone down, and all hands perished; and though I had laid my clasped hands together, waiting silently the tidings which should put the seal to my fixed belief, I could scarcely read the words again, for the unutterable horror that was upon me. And besides that paper of a bygone date, another was given to me, for it was necessary that I should know all; and my father's name was there,—Jesse Cameron, Esq., as also his wife's, two female servants', and a man-servant's, all mentioned; for the statistics had been received from Madeira, of the manner in which the ship sailed from the island.

The *Southern Belle* had encountered gales in the Bay of Biscay, which, it appeared, she was not in a condition to weather; and a sharp breeze springing up on the night of the 28th, she was driven on the rocks off the northern



coast of Spain. The *Oceana*, one of the Oriental Steam Company's ships, hovering in sight, could render no aid. Within reach of the land, and at only a short distance from the *Oceana*, the unfortunate vessel struck, and, in the darkness of the night, sank instantly, doubtless. Rafts and spars floating to the shore bore no bodies upon them ; it seemed that the shock had been instantaneous, and precluded any effort for the saving of life to be made by those who perished, for not one had escaped. The victims, arising from their watery graves long after life had become extinct, had been borne to the shore, and were buried by the inhabitants. Then followed the succinct depositions made by the officers and crew of the Oriental Company's vessel, together with the stern rebukes of the board of inquiry as to the wrecked ship being not seaworthy. I read the whole.

My father—my father ! The same frightful fate which had left Francisco's wife an orphan, had swallowed up my sole remaining parent. And he left me, when last I saw him, with anger, struggling with grief ; and looked upon me, when he was never to look upon me again, in the sleep of the disease by which my life had been threatened when I did that which he had disapproved.

I was utterly comfortless ! not senseless, as I had been before, in terrible suffering, that approached me at my call. This was the hand of God !

I, a miserable mortal, could only sink down in such an awful calamity, bowing my head to the blast. Alas ! I knew not even then the whole extent of my loss ; but I was an orphan. My father's ashes I could not even sepulchre ; and there was none to tell his only child the spot where the relentless sea engulfed him, or whether among the fishers' huts on the fatal coast some charitable hand had made a grave to cover them.

I would seek out the spot—that was my determination. I must shake off this nightmare, and go at once. A Cameron—and to have not even a grave ! My father ! my father ! thank God, I am rich ; I will seek out your body, my father, and it shall rest in the place prepared for it, and where your daughter can approach it.

*Had the wife and menials bearing him company made other hearts desolate as mine ? I could not think it ; for*

once more that easily uttered word, which it takes so much to verify, was on my lips. "My all was gone. Now I had lost my all."

"Whence should they rise, these victims, on the day of judgment?" I breathed that inquiry aloud from the depths of my trouble; and Mr. Barton repeated, "Whence shall they arise? The sea shall give up her dead."

"If she holdeth it?" I cried; "but not even that is known to me! Sacrilegious hands may have tossed aside my father's hair, stripped him of his raiment," I continued wildly, for, oh! I felt anguish within, "and I shall never know it."

"My dear child, your trouble is great!—may God support you! Hard is it to remember whose is the hand that strikes. And even this is not the only blow which has now fallen upon you, dear Mary Cameron." The voice of the minister failed him as he pronounced the last words, and Mrs. Barton rose up hastily and left the room. But they could have nothing to tell me that could give me another pang;—had I not lost my father?

I had not realized the conviction of the consequences of my father's death. That he was gone, and would never at any distant time be seen again by me on earth, was the one present thought in my mind. I had not remembered my inheritance, when I thanked God that I was not poor; it was because of late I had seen poverty, and I knew the worth of money better, and was grateful that I had never wanted it. I had not associated my father's death with my becoming an heiress, the mistress of Lynwood Hall.

Mr. Barton said some words, incoherent and unintelligible, which first awoke me to this fact; and I burst into a torrent of tears, that my dreadful loss should thus be garlanded by my riches.

Then, while he was wondering why I wept (for he had made as yet no disclosures), I glanced in fancy around those gardens where Lillie and I walked side by side. They were *mine* now. Again I inhabited the dwelling where old memories reigned—I knelt again by the marble tomb, where I would one day bring my father! That was a resolve. And the purest feeling amid it all was the vision of the cottagers, *by whom I should still be loved*;—they would delight in my

sway. The terrible past, the awful present, the untried future, careered together for one brief moment—for one brief moment only—as I had planned them.

No more was said by Mr. Barton, than he had intended as a preparation for further tidings; but the moment he began to speak, I felt a prescience of what was coming. He had not uttered two sentences, invoking God's guardianship and my submission—I heard something about "the blast to the shorn lamb"—when I rose up, and laid my hand upon his shoulder, saying, "Mr. Barton, is Lynwood mine?"

"My child!" he exclaimed.

"Is Lynwood mine?" I repeated; "or am I a beggar as well as an orphan?"

"God forbid you should ever be a beggar while I have bread, and a roof over my head. Compose yourself, my dear, we cannot tell what may be in store,—perhaps countless benefits!"

There was no need for his kindness to bid me be composed,—I was composed. The loss of fortune could be nothing to me who had lost my father. So it seemed at first; but when all that it involved obtruded itself upon me, I felt a gnawing pain the more, though I could form no estimate of the truth. The fact of my not being rich, as I supposed was the case, conveyed a very meagre idea of the reality to my excited mind, overcharged with grief for death; it was not until I was told by these faithful friends, with overflowing eyes, that my affairs required my immediate attention—not until they pressed upon me, with the most earnest tenderness, that henceforth their home must be my home—was I able to form an idea of what was meant by being portionless. I stared wildly at one and the other, I suppose; for I thought that I might have to earn my bread from some such people as the Ellmores. Must I do that or perish?—*Perish!*

Mrs. Barton's arms were around me, and she spoke words such as mothers speak, for she saw the shock was great at last: "Bravely have you borne up, my child; we must not see you fail now. You are not alone, my dearest; we love you; you will be a daughter to us in our old age, in return for the friendship we received at the hands of your parents. You will struggle through this, as through all that went

before ; and perhaps in years to come we may smile upon the memory of this sad day. Mary, my dear, we will remain here no longer ; we will go all of us to the Vicarage ; there what remains to be settled by you can best be done, and you will not rebel at the dispensation of Providence. Child of my heart, are you more unfortunate than the poor girl of whom you told me, who could not arrive at Bonn in time to close her mother's eyes, and that mother died in want ?

"No," I replied ; "I am not more unfortunate than she. And now, if you please, I will hear the details of that which so immediately concerns me."

And sitting in a chair by the fire—yet so cold that I was wrapped in a large shawl—and watching the huge flakes of snow that were falling against the window, I listened to the story of the loss of the whole of my father's possessions.

"We were very sorry to intrude upon your grief, my dear young friend," Mr. Barton began,—“your natural grief for events so sad and painful,—but I am compelled to return to Lynwood, and I believe there should be no time lost in seeing your solicitor and doing what we can for you ; indeed, I have already taken steps on my own account, which I will lay before you.”

And he laid them before me ; they were not such as I approved. It might have been his duty to endeavour to secure a wreck ; but I could not suffer it when I knew the particulars. It appeared that my father had been induced, during the few months that succeeded his marriage, by a near relative of Mrs. Cameron's, to embark large sums in mining speculations, in which this gentleman was deeply interested. The iron-mine had been worked by three distinct companies for some time past ; therefore there was a justifiable expectation that they would prove of value, and if of value at all, of enormous value ; but these anticipations had not been realized. The principal working company had thrown up their contract a few months after my father left England, which notification had not been sent out to him, as the strongest feeling in favour of the perspective promise yet existing was entertained by many of those who were personally concerned. All was, *however, at an end three months later ; and this intelligence would have reached my father in Madeira, had he remained*

fifteen days longer on the island. If anything could console me in his death, it was the thought of what he was spared.

*I* might school myself to the belief that the loss of fortune was a vague evil ; and now I was close to the spectre, *I* had a misgiving ; but, my papa—proud and generous-hearted !—he would have sunk under the misfortunes which had overtaken us. The last and bitterest drop remains to be told. Added to his own fortune, my father had employed Francisco's property, which was in his hands, and which he had held for many years at interest ; and in the general ruin it also was involved. That this also should have been placed in jeopardy, was a proof to me of the confidence entertained of the results ; but they must have been large inducements to him (an inexperienced man in such matters), which perilled the fortune of another as well as his own.

This last was an appalling strain upon me, so frightful and so irremediable ; and it remained to be made known, and in part by me, to him whom it most nearly concerned. Brief had been my day of returning peace and pleasure ; and the future life which lay before me admitted not of sleep now. Now, indeed, there was labour before me, as well as the labour's field. I might work for my daily bread, as well as for peace of mind. There would be nothing remaining, when all debts were paid. The house to which my mother had come as a bride, and where I first drew breath,—the very timber, the flowers, the living creatures,—they must all go, with those pleasant fields, to the promptest and highest bidder ! That was the fate of the inheritance which my human parents designed me ; the inheritance at the hand of my heavenly Father remained yet to come ;—it was a meek and gentle spirit, of which my mother had spoken on her death-bed.

And while I was to be a hireling in the pay of strangers, and while the vials of trouble poured thickly upon me, was Edward Raymond altogether forgetful of what I had once been to him ? I heard nothing either of him or the general feeling of the neighbourhood. What was likely to do me good I did hear from time to time ; what would have vexed me was withheld.

*I only knew that I saw him not ; nor did I hear from him. It was very strange, and I recurred tenderly to him.*

More wonderful than that he should ever have loved me—so different as were our natures—was it that, having once loved me, he could so soon thus forget! Over his name a mist was fast rising, enveloping all that had seemed amiss, and he was changing imperceptibly into a fair and sunny memory, which, like the flowers of my early days, would come to me no more in this world, but which I never might forget. Infinitely distressing to me was the thought that Francisco suffered in this ruin.

A gleam had shot athwart my heart—might I now go to them?—instantly engulfed by the recollection that he might be greatly impoverished, and that I, of all others, was the last person dowerless to share his home.

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

Charity spread wide her pitying arms, and  
Took *her* in, who was bereaved and lonely;  
And peace fell o'er the bruised and aching heart.

I COULD not of course return home with Mrs. Barton, nor could she desire it, when seriously weighing the effect a residence, of however short duration, must have upon me in the village which was mine no more. From Cranston I received letters breathing brotherly sympathy and regard; suggestions, he pleaded, he was at a loss to offer me. Would I not write? Surely the stores of my mind could afford a book, from the leaves of which fruit would fall. In a later letter he pressed the point upon me. But I had a repugnance to do this thing; I had a confidence in my power, but I did not know how just it was. I had no literary acquaintances whose opinion might have decided me. Also, how and where could I write, when each day I remained in my present abode I felt that it ought to be the last, for it was far too expensive to be a fit residence for me in my altered condition. When Mrs. Barton found that I would not accompany her to Lynwood, she insisted upon remaining with me, until I had made some arrangement for the future. *January was wearing away, for the painful businesses to be transacted lengthened the days by what we felt in their*

duration ; and it was like three months to me, instead of one, since the fatal announcement of the wreck had reached us.

Neither Mrs. Barton nor myself could think of anything for me but another situation. I sickened at the thought of Lilbury Park ; should I meet with another like that ? Yet what could have bidden more fair than my engagement with the Ellmores ? Again I examined the newspapers ; this time better initiated, I sought out the institutions where women's talents are mostly bartered for the merest pittance of life, now to be my sole support, not as before, no object. I thought of the twenty-five shillings ; perhaps I might live to want it.

But a more merciful dispensation awaited me ; as daily I grew hotter with the fever of care, and continued to seek for an abode to shelter me, I found one which promised much, suddenly and independently of exertion. In the boarding-house at which we stayed, next to ourselves, at breakfast, sat a lady, who casually mentioning that she was in London in order to seek a governess for her children, I offered myself, and with very few preliminaries, and no conversation with Mrs. Barton, as I might have expected would take place, remembering the impertinent questionings of the Ellmores, this lady engaged my services, at a handsome remuneration, in contradistinction to them ; and waiting only the result of a letter addressed by her to Lilbury Park, the contents of which I did not learn at that time, my present destiny was decided. I left London in company with Mrs. Milford a few days afterwards, having bidden adieu to my friend with an aching heart, and looked into the dismal future sinkingly, wearily.

My second situation was in a clergyman's family in the midland counties ; and a girl of fourteen and a boy of eight years of age, the only children, were my pupils.

I had arrived at Findon Rectory only a few hours, when I was assured that my present position must be in every respect a contrast to the last I held among strangers.

I thanked God heartily thus early, for I saw about me the requisites of a gentlewoman, and I inhaled the atmosphere of human-kindness.

*Mr. Milford placed a chair for me by the fireside, more inviting than the rest ; and his eyes falling upon my black*

robes, he spoke a few words to me indicative of the tone of his religious feelings, and expressing his hope that my educational system embraced that foundation ; adding his condolence in my apparent affliction, and his wishes that the air of their neighbourhood, in re-establishing my health, would tend to alleviate my sorrow. It was no more than one would expect from a Christian minister ; but it surprised me in my experience of the conduct accorded to my race, the unfortunate governesses, and it went some way towards procuring me a night of rest.

Shortly, I found that my first impressions were realized, and in my gratitude I set earnestly to my vocation, devoting myself almost entirely to the children who were thus unscrupulously placed in my charge. I durst not look back, I forbore to look forward ; the present was provided for, and it was enough. In my forlorn condition I had found a generous asylum ; and for the rest my lips were sealed, like the lady's who had wept over the two fair children at Lilbury.

What was the place of my grave to others, that I should unclosethe its caverned vaults, and admit what could not be consolation, to commit sacrilege there ? No matter what I had been, they saw me as I was ; and the Milfords were pleased to yield me, after a long residence with them, a high tribute of respect. I endeavoured to merit the approval of the conscientious parents of pupils to whom I became greatly attached ; but they gave me more, they *honoured* my exertions ; therefore the bread I earned was sweet.

I was with that family nearly five years, nor did I leave them to spend my vacations elsewhere, with the exception of an occasional few days spent in London with the Bartons (who of late years had had more requirements in London, from various circumstances), which I only needed to ask for, to obtain, and at the expiration of which I was gladly welcomed back.

Those years were marked from beyond the ocean by the birth of three children to my cousin Francisco,—their first-born, a daughter, in the first year of their marriage ; the second, a daughter, a twelvemonth later ; and a baby boy after an interval of two years.

My heart *had truly* shared their joy in their great happiness. No word of complaint had reached me in consequence



of papa's misfortunes, of which, as respected myself, they had never known the extent. They had long eagerly entreated that I would go out to them; and I cherished the thought that, far down in the future, that might come to pass, should we live until all of us were old.

The tidings of the birth of their boy reached me, therefore, when I had been about three years and a half at Findon Rectory; and it was about the time of the receipt of that intelligence that several events shook the tranquillity that had fallen upon my career.

The birth, the altar, and the grave, how they press on each other's steps! The beautiful boy smiled and danced in his worshipping mother's arms, in the distant fortress by the sea, whose glassy waves reflected the colours of his father's banners. And Cranston Barton, my Lillie's brother, wrote to me from his easel, in the humble lodgings to which expensive studies, and his passion for art, had for the present consigned him; that the glory had come to him, which neither the power nor the riches of genius could ever have supplied. He was betrothed to a maiden, who, embodying the painter's dream, possessed nothing more vulgar. Friends she had few, relations fewer; her father and mother were both dead; and she too was a governess, neglected and forlorn until she encountered him. They would marry one day when he dared involve her in the fluctuating promise of a profession proverbially uncertain. Painfully so to him, for (which I did not know at that time) his conceptions so fine, yet failed in their carrying out. There was an ingredient required, which at present belonged not to him, to make his handiwork worthy. His was the suffering, the fine suffering of genius, in which not a sordid influence mingled; more galling than the indifference of artists or critics was his own inappreciation. The midnight lamp burnt ceaselessly in its socket, and the breath came thick and fast over forms of beauty that would not live. And it is useless to labour long and fast—better to sit by. If the mantle will not fall upon the wearer in the cool air of the morning, when refreshing sleep has invigorated, and sight and brain are clear, it will not descend upon weariness, tired frame, and aching heart. *Lay by the palette, wan, pale man, that will not purchase the bride. She shall come, with vigour and new life,*

ing the air of success ; and you shall look back to these  
sh struggles of the overtasked genius defeating its end,  
7 amid her smiles. Patience ! do not let the magnitude  
prize impede the progress by the way. After all, this  
earth ! which, compared to the heaven that is to be,  
a kingdom of dreams.

ultaneously with Francisco's letter, and the letter of  
ton Barton, I received (an equal shock it must have  
to him, as to me, for he could not have known it when  
ssing me) the news of Mrs. Barton's death. Faithful  
! Had I heard of her illness, I should have gone to  
ck-bed, as she had come to mine ; but that being all  
te, I did not attempt to attend the funeral, although  
had been more becoming to follow her to the grave  
I, who had all my life been a recipient of her good-

ly we know our friends only in the dark seasons of  
diversity. While I danced gaily down life's stream,  
my hand in my youthful lover's, I was less mindful  
s. Barton than at any other period of my life ; and I  
guessed her worth until I was stricken, or knew it  
I was bereaved. I wore the black robes of mourning,  
h the eyes of her kindred would never behold them ;  
shed many tears for her death—though another of my  
res was safe thereby.

was during the summer succeeding her death, when I  
ur-and-twenty, that I was introduced to a gentleman  
s name of Russell. I was accustomed to see persons  
visited at the Rectory, for I received all attention from  
ilfords which they could have offered to one of their  
7. I occasionally visited also, in company with my  
—now my only one, for Theodore had gone to school.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Eternity will dissolve, but Time can never heal ;  
Therefore is Life a hope, altho' it holds despair.

THERE had been a large property to be sold in the neighbourhood ; a baronial residence, and an extensive park ; and the country being picturesque, and the distance short to the rail, with other advantages, there had been great competition about the purchase of the estate. It was bought by Mr Russell, who took immediate possession, and upon whom the parents of my pupil lost no time in calling, as he would be henceforth their most influential parishioner.

When Mr. Russell returned the visit, I was sitting alone in the drawing-room, for it chanced that Miss Milford was not engaged with her studies that day, and there was nothing about me to indicate that I was other than a guest in the house. It would not have influenced him had he known that I was "the governess," notwithstanding the odium attached in fashionable society to the sisterhood. But he did not know it, for when Mrs. Milford entered the room and interrupted the casual sentences we were exchanging as strangers, there was nothing in her cordial manner to convey to the visitor that I was other than what I seemed. Therefore we met on equal terms. It was years since I had distinguished any gentleman by my particular regards (but I was instantly attracted toward Mr. Russell, I knew not how or why) ; not since I had watched the strength and beauty of Francisco, and the gentleness and beauty of Edward,—never since those days. And the kisses my affianced had left upon my lips ; and those which my brother had graven upon my brow, had never been displaced. I was old in human feeling, yet the real life of my being had yet to be begun.

*Mr. Russell was a tall man, with bright masses of black hair, which particularly attracted the admiration of strangers. Have you seen at Hampton Court the Ignatius Loyola*

Titian? Mr. Russell resembled that. His features were regular enough, but it was their expression upon which one dwelt. He spoke a little with me after the entrance of Mrs. Milford, but principally with her; though I was sensible from time to time that he was scrutinizing me. He rose to take leave, after a very long call, promising to repeat his visit soon, in order to see Mr. Milford, who was that morning absent, and then he departed. He did not shake hands with me as he did with Mrs. Milford.

I walked to the window, and looked after him as he mounted his horse, something, after the manner of Francisco, and rode off at full gallop.

I did not see Mr. Russell again for some weeks, excepting as I saw him at church. I was in my school-room when he called the second time, and it appeared he had not inquired for me, since Mrs. Milford never omitted to mention such attentions; so I concluded, as he constantly saw me take my seat by the side of my pupil at church, with or without her mother, that he had ascertained my position in the family, and it had not occurred to him since to ask after my health.

I had never resigned my old habit of scribbling, and I was indulging myself (I am sorry to say) upon the fly-leaf of a new book, which Caroline had given to me, when I next came in contact with Mr. Russell, of Bletchley Hall. I felt it so ridiculous to be found by a stranger, sitting alone with my pencil and victimized book, when my stupid appearance (for I had been indulging in two or three stray tears) must have attracted his attention, that I was extremely confused,—haughty too, and wanting in dignity, each at the same time,—when Mr. Russell came quickly into the room without any announcement. I heard a step behind me, and there he was. I was provoked also to feel myself uncomfortable.

We exchanged some little conversation upon the weather, the very interesting valve of English dilemma; but whether other remarks I offered were ill-timed, or did not suit his taste, Mr. Russell's answers were short, sharp rather, and presently his manner irritated me. I thought he assumed this to me—"Better be upon my guard; I know what you are now." "You need have no fear that the governess should attack you, sir!" my heart said fiercely.

Now, in speaking, I never gave a gentleman "sir," unless I entirely respected him ; few men ever had that at my lips.

Yet already in my thoughts the homage was rendered to him. He held the title to my honour. I had twice rung, that Mrs. Milford might be told that Mr. Russell was in the breakfast-room ; but no Mrs. Milford appeared for some time, and such an unsatisfactory *tête-à-tête* was becoming tiresome. I forgot to talk, and glanced down at the book which lay in my lap. In another moment I had taken it up, and was reading what I had been putting down, when I was interrupted. It was very *nonchalante*, this tossing of book covers, on my part ; but then he stood with his back partly towards me, gazing out upon the meadows. He must have had very long sight to distinguish my irregular verse at that distance.

"You don't compose, I hope, Miss Cameron?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Ah!" again there was silence.

"As with electric touch the dimpled fingers  
Twined the rich braiding of the mother's raven hair,  
And the low laugh of that sweet silvery cistern  
Rang on the morning breeze—  
Where the resting sire lay sleeping ;"

I got so far in my private reading.

"I have some literary friends, a large circle, but I don't know what they live on, not reason or sense, I am sure, in this generation.

"The authors and authoresses of our father's times were of different stuff. Poets! we have no poets! I will not admit that we have one; and the men who have written prose outlived their day. L. . . . might have recovered himself a few years back, and B. . . . was not such a fool till he wrote,—"

I cannot convey the scorn with which he uttered these denunciations of the writer of the people, and the titled author who is world-famed. "As for women, let them cling to their proper sphere, which is not in book-shops. There is nothing I hate to equal a book, or a picture with a woman's name to it. Give me the woman who can sit at home, let her rank be what it may, or shine in elegant society if she will, so she be not blue; who can charm her husband and guide her children, and do the duty of her

house. The idea of a woman with a pen or a brush in her hand—it is gross ! As if we wanted their intellect. We want their hearts ! As if we wanted their notions of perfection—we can see it for ourselves in surrounding things and in the face of their beauty.”

This was an harangue delivered while the speaker was still by his distant window, polishing the silver mounting of his riding-whip with his white-gloved fingers. I never was so amazed in my life. I put into my pocket my transcript of Francisco's boy, and began to examine more minutely the appearance of this tiger sort of person. He did not look in the least handsome to-day ; perhaps he never was that exactly. What with his mood, and the Jesuit hanging behind him, with its face clear and calm, the stern and stone-cold brow, which the tempest of feeling never could have ruffled, the lips rich and full, the dark glances of the grave eyes, all so alike, yet such a contrast to the living man, I conceived a dislike of Mr. Russell. I wished he would vanish ; it made me feel oppressed that he should inhale the same atmosphere with me—but Mrs. Milford at last came in at that moment. Mr. Russell was now all smiles. He became conversational in the most agreeable vein. I rose up to leave the room, and was passing beyond him with a slight bow, when he said, “Miss Cameron, I rode over to ask if it would afford you any pleasure to see a few pictures I have ; they are, I believe, of some little value as works of art. I am aware (for Mrs. Milford has told me so), that you are a very intellectual person ; I am quite sure you appreciate beautiful things. If it be convenient, and you will do me the honour, Miss Cameron,” turning to Mrs. Milford, “Mrs. Milford will, I hope, drive you over. I am this week perfectly disengaged, and were I not, my avocations are not of such a nature as that they might not be waived.”

I was compelled to stand during this speech, while Mr. Russell occupied a position directly in my way, I was extremely provoked by what I believed to be satire running through it all, so that I had scarcely patience to make a proper reply. But it did not enter my head to decline this invitation certainly. Whatever I said must have been an *affirmative*, for as he bowed me out at the door, I met a *glance which caused me to lower my regards from his face*

I did not lift my eyes off the ground until I was in my own room with the door shut.

But being there safely, I only wrote a letter. I had no intention that my thoughts should be careering after the strange man below ; and I had a suspicion that they would be if I were not better employed. I rang the bell, and summoned my pupil to sit with me when my letter was finished ; for although I believed the house to be clear of him, I did not wish to cross his tall shape in the hall, if I again went down.

We were reading together Prescott's "History of Ferdinand and Isabella." I was as much interested as if I had never heard it before. The struggles of the poor Jews ! that was the part where we were. Good intelligent Caroline ! it was very rare for me to have to reprove my pupil. She was most affectionate towards me ; indeed, quite winning ; what attracted that young girl so entirely towards me I cannot imagine. That she should love me was not strange, but she loved me with exceeding tenderness. It had now begun to be a trial to her that, as she was advancing in age, she would not long have an excuse to keep me with her.

When she was tired of reading aloud, the book was laid down, and she sat a long time in silence. Then she said, "Dearest Miss Cameron, I cannot imagine how it is you are not a married lady—pardon me, I often think what a lovely wife you would make. But we have no one in our neighbourhood who is good enough for you ; now, if Mr. Russell were a different sort of man, that would be delightful—so near us."

I had been on the point of placing a veto upon this very unusual style of conversation, but I suddenly felt a curiosity to know what this unsophisticated girl really did think of Mr. Russell.

"How would you alter Mr. Russell, my love, to make him such as a lady might marry ?"

"Oh, many ladies might marry him as he is, I dare say. I said yourself, dear Miss Cameron."

"Then what would you have him, my dear ?"

"I don't think he could be altered, because if one attempted to alter him, he would be spoiled entirely. He is satirical ; he never means what he says, or if he does one never knows it, and that is what I dislike."

"When did you arrive at these opinions?"

"When I called at the Hall with mamma. He was asking of you, for instance, in the most indifferent manner, when I am sure he was anxious mamma should talk about you. Why did he not speak out and inquire after a lady like a man?"

"My dear! nonsense! Mr. Russell does not know anything of me."

"But he wishes he did, Miss Cameron; I am sure of it, dear; he is watching you with his large eyes whenever I look at him in church, and I am convinced he admires you as much as every one else does."

"You have some extraordinary ideas, Caroline, which you must put out of your head. Now go and prepare for luncheon, and I must never allow you to talk in this foolish manner again. This is the day we are to walk to Winterhead, for your mamma, is it not?"

"Yes, I had forgotten, that will be delightful!"

And away flew Caroline.

At luncheon there was an unusual brilliancy upon Mrs. Milford's cheeks. Her husband inquired how long her visitor had been here, when he himself came home.

"He had been here some time," replied Mrs. Milford, "I think Mr. Russell likes the rectory. He runs away with my mornings relentlessly, and yet I left him to Miss Cameron's tender mercies partly to-day; I was myself particularly engaged."

"I hope," said Mr. Milford, gravely, "that Miss Cameron entertained Mr. Russell as she can entertain."

This was, I knew, a general remark, for Mr. Milford never made allusions, such as this would have been from many persons' lips. What he had to say, he always said boldly; but these few words sent the colour to my face, and destroyed my comfort during luncheon. We put on our bonnets and set forth, Caroline and I. She linked her arm in mine, and I carried the basket, which was not to be trusted out of my hand. It was very bright without being sultry, therefore we had the prospect of a pleasant walk. We crossed the stone stile from the garden, and passed into the plantation beyond. *It was a lovely grove of sycamores. All nature was fair to our eyes; the birds trilled over our heads.*



the flowers impregnated the air. I felt lighter of heart than I had done for long.

"Miss Cameron," said Caroline, "I hope you were not displeased with my nonsense this morning. I was telling mamma what I had said to you, and she thought it was very impertinent, and so I could not be happy till I had begged you to excuse me. I am so silly," she exclaimed, looking up at me with tears in her eyes.

I was vexed to hear this had gone to Mrs. Milford, affording her a poor specimen of our school-room conversation; and it was ridiculous that she should have heard my name in any way associated with Mr. Russell's; but I readily granted the pardon my pupil begged, though her first offence was decidedly aggravated.

We passed a cottage upon the glebe-land, and stayed to speak to the mistress of it, who was standing at the door with a child in her arms, looking in character with all the rest,—simple, pretty, and gay.

"Would you please to take a bit of honeysuckle, Miss Cameron?" said Mrs. Parker, at the same time gathering a splendid bouquet and putting it into my hand. "That gentleman that's come to Bletchley Hall was past here to-day, and he pulled up his horse (he does ride at such a rate), and noticed the honeysuckle. It looks kindly of a gentleman to take a delight in poor folks' things. He's a nice-spoken gentleman too, so free, not a bit of pride about him. I gathered him a posy, just such a one as I've given to you, and he stuck it in his button-hole and rode away as blithe as a lark. They tell me he'll do a power o' good round the neighbourhood."

At the first break in the discourse, while Caroline was amused with the babe, I took leave of Mrs. Parker, thinking I was to hear of nothing but Mr. Russell the length and breadth of this day. Comparing the widely different verdicts of the plain woman and the young lady, I wondered to which my judgment leaned; carrying carefully the while in my hand the wild bouquet of the fragrant honeysuckle of which he had got the match.

*Caroline allured me presently into repeating some pieces of poetry, which I could remember, and in which she*

delighted. The only allusion I had ever made to home and friends to this young girl had been in connection with these rhetorical pieces: I had said that I once had a dear young friend, with whom they were associated, who had died early in consumption.

"Will you repeat to me one of those fine pieces, Miss Cameron, which do not make you sad?" I repeated to her "Meantime within the chamber of the king stood Salimenes;" it is entitled, "Sardanapalus preparing for Battle."

I never could say that piece without getting very much excited. Just as I was concluding the last lines, I saw a gentleman coming along whom at that distance I believed to be Mr. Russell—Mr. Russell again.

He was on foot now, with his black Newfoundland—his splendid "Shylock," as I knew the dog was called—and a greyhound besides. We could not get out of his way; and if we could, why should we? But what could bring him in our path again? It was a very absurd and disagreeable circumstance. Caroline made no remark when she recognized who it was that approached.

When we were near enough to speak, he said pleasantly, "An agreeable day for walking, ladies; I wonder, however, you do not prefer to come out after dinner in August: I thought the complexion suffered from exposure to the sun."

"We very frequently walk in the evening," I replied, "but our hours are not according to the laws of the Medes and Persians; we consult our daily tastes."

"But it is a bad thing to be ruled by our tastes; we get wrong sometimes if we trust to our liking."

He had turned, and was walking by our side.

"I think, however, taste may have weight with us," I observed.

"In the gravest as well as the most trivial decisions of our life!—Down, sir, down!"

Shylock was jumping upon my dress, and obliging me to play pranks with him.

"Down sir!" reiterated his master, who, however, laughed at our sport.

He was a magnificent dog. It was a long time since I had touched such a creature; it brought back to my mind a thousand memories—I could have embraced his glossy neck

"You are not superior to play then, Miss Cameron?"

"I am superior to affectation," I replied.

"Shylock! so, sir!—Shall you come and see my pictures?"

"Mrs. Milford has an engagement to-morrow; on Thursday, I believe, we are to call at Bletchley."

"That is very kind: I shall not stir from the house all day."

"I fear you will suffer from the imprisonment."

"I suffer already."

"From imprisonment?"

"Synonymous—from want of liberty."

I laughed. Strange man—it must be a hempen thong to bind him.

"What is there to laugh at?"

"Your captivity, which is an irresistible idea."

"Irresistible, indeed! In what way is it irresistible? I presume you enjoy securing it,"—a pause—"and rendering it eternal," he concluded in a low tone, reaching my ear only.

"I think there are many species of captivity, Mr. Russell. One is the captivity of sense, led prisoner by prejudice, edged on by ignorance, born of egregious folly."

"Go on!"

"No I have finished, I have redeemed my aspersed honour, attacked by you in a tirade upon women in general, which I did not vindicate on the instant, feeling it were better at another time."

"How knew you another time would arrive? Do not your heroes expire at a stroke in lieu of their honour remaining in question for a single hour?"

"Do you expect of women what you know of men?" Caroline was behind; he was close by my side, looking down upon me from his great height.

"I expect from women nobility, purity, tenderness. I know of strength, and power, and fame, which men hold in their hands; let each hold his and her separate place! There, I've done. I won't vex you any more, lest I rouse the lion afresh: the sight of the beast scares me; I am a man of frail nerve."

I was obliged to indulge myself—to laugh was a luxury to-day.

We were coming to a boundary which divided this field from his property. He held open the gate for us to pass

through: it looked like the entrance into the magician's land beyond, the mossy turf was so green, and the boughs of the trees, which made the pathway shadowy.

"No," I said, "we have walked far already; we will return, Caroline."

Would he turn with us?—there was nothing to deter him. I wanted to hear yet something more. There was a delicious tone about him, a daring defiant tone, a tone that combated mine and roused me to the excitement, the long dormant luxury, of doing battle. He did *not* turn to accompany us on our return; he raised his hat, whistled his dogs, and was gone.

I noticed this moment, for the first time, that I was still carrying the honeysuckle like his own. I was very thankful his bouquet had not remained in its original receptacle.

Thought wouldn't be put down any longer—the verdict of the court of appreciation would deliver itself. Mr. Russell was not the weak-minded person his discourse of the morning might have led me to imagine.

He, the rider rough-shod over all my adorations, could mount the elegant high-bred steed and, having mounted, he sat at ease; not tightening the snaffle in the fine mouth and exhibiting absurd pranks of his horsemanship, rushing through bullfinches, over compassless breadths, at risk of the horse, at peril of the rider; but, like a gallant gentleman, with his hand upon the rein, an eye to the action of his noble beast, and the presence of the lady who is riding by his side. I must have been removed from the body and the ordinary faculties of it, for Caroline made her observations upon pleasant things around us, and, except that I seemed to hear the cooing of some ring-dove, or the distant splash of fountains, nothing interrupted my reverie.

"We reached home, and took our tea together; for at this stage of Caroline's life, when most young ladies are made, or have grown into, women of the world, she was still a school-girl, and her judicious mother treated her as such. We dined at two, when Mr. and Mrs. Milford had luncheon; and we took our tea in my sitting-room, while dinner was served below; after which, it was our custom to take work or other occupation to the drawing-room, where we amused ourselves as we pleased.

Caroline had a very sweet voice, in which I delighted; I could never sing well myself, but I was able to superintend the practice of the lessons she received from a professor.

I occasionally sang a little to please her; and during these years that I had been in the stage between home and the world—the middle stage, so separate from each—those little songs I had known all my life carried me back more than anything else to the old spots and faces.

I knew a Spanish *canta*, set to a superb melody, full, deep, majestic. Francisco was always beside the instrument upon which I played that air:—

“A la guerra, á la guerra!  
Marchemos con ardor  
Con fusil y bayoneta,  
De los jóvenes la flor.”

I was singing it, with a rush of feeling concentrated upon this little song, when Mrs. Milford came to us from the dining-room. I went on—I was not afraid of taking my recreation because she was there. Presently, having contented myself, I left the piano and sat down with my work near her at the window! To my surprise, she began talking to me about my family; she had never entered upon the subject before. Caroline was walking in front of our windows, with her sweet, coaxing manner preferring some request to her father; at least, so I concluded by her expression and his.

“Were you in another situation besides Miss Ellmore’s before you came to Findon, my dear Miss Cameron?”

“No,” I replied; “that was my first situation.”

“And did you hear of it readily? I mean, was it arranged by your friends that you should go there?”

“No, madam; that is, one friend assisted me to obtain it.”

She looked up inquiringly, and I could not mistake the sincere interest which I saw in her expression; and I knew perfectly well what she desired to ascertain, and for what purpose. I did not know whether I would satisfy her or not; but if she were a true friend—and she must be that—why should I be so shy to speak of what so nearly concerned me?

“I was at that time labouring under some anxiety of mind,” I continued, “and I believed that the most beneficial

for me to pursue for its relief was the finding of an action which, being imperative and praiseworthy, would set me out of myself and be good for me."

Certainly, my dear, it was without doubt a wise resolution and therefore you went to Lilbury Park. Then you resolved and carried out your resolution unassisted by your friends?"

Oh yes! indeed, mamma had been many years dead, my father was not then with me to render me any assistance."

Indeed!" said Mrs. Milford, kindly.

Therefore I was mistress of my actions, and I availed myself of my liberty to take the step I have named."

Yes, my dear; and the friend of whom you spoke, who was he?"

My friend was not a gentleman, madam; but the same with whom you first saw me,—the wife of the clergyman of my native village, with whom I was ever upon the most intimate terms; indeed, she acted a mother's part to me."

She was a very pleasing person, I remember."

It grieves me greatly to look down upon this black shroud, Mrs. Milford, by which I am reminded that she is no more."

When we are far from our friends, and do not see the scene of death and mourning, we can with difficulty believe that those whom we loved are gone—I find it so."

And your father, my dear?" continued Mrs. Milford, expressing the kindest sympathy with me—"Your father, my dear, where is he?"

It was something remarkable to hear these delicate and yet, but still resolute and persevering questions, from the mouth of one in whose house I had lived for nearly four years. It was a high testimony of respect to me personally, that among whom I had been cast, should have remained unnoticed in profound ignorance, of the connections, condition, and antecedents, of the woman with whom they entirely neglected the education of their daughter; and, satisfied with her appearance and conduct, should have offered no allusion or imperturbable silence about herself, until the hour in which they believed it for her own welfare that she should hear from her who, what, and whence was her governess who, coming to them with no introduction

tion but the vaguely and illnaturedly expressed testimonial of Miss Ellmore, had made herself a home in their house. Miss Ellmore's letter, I had long known, would not have sufficed to secure me this unexceptionable situation, had I not been upon the spot, and had not Mrs. Milford detected the malevolence manifested by Miss Ellmore.

"My father also is dead, madam."

"Ah! is it so indeed? And have you no relatives in England? I will tell you why I say that. I have intended to make a confession to you before. Miss Cameron, I went into your dressing-room, a long time ago—three months since, perhaps—wishing to speak to you. I did not find you there. I saw upon the table a very handsome brooch: I could not resist taking it up, for I have never seen you wear it. I beg your pardon,—it was an unwarrantable liberty; but I took up the beautiful brooch, and admired the different shades of hair—the black, and the other dark plume, and the little shining curl in the centre. I thought, with the pearls and gold binding, I had never seen anything so pretty, and was laying it down again, when I perceived a portrait on the other side. It was very wrong, my dear; but I hope you will accept my apology; I am very sorry if I have hurt your feelings. I saw that it was the portrait of a young and very handsome gentleman, and I did feel that I wished you could allow my husband and myself to approach the sanctuary of your joys and sorrows. The latter are past, I hope. I have not yet completed my confession. A subject which has arisen lately induced me to tell my husband about the brooch. I will not repeat to you all my dear husband said of you in consequence; but you are aware, dear Miss Cameron, that our beloved Caroline, being now almost a woman, we cannot much longer keep her in the school-room, and that, therefore, we shall not need you in your present capacity. And I can only say, for my husband and myself, that we shall be most happy, if at any time you will permit us, and we are able, to serve you; and you must not think of leaving us at the expiration of the term, you must show your kind feeling towards us by remaining *some months*, at least, upon a visit, and at all future times *using our house as your home*; we can never repay the *beneficial effects* of your care and example upon our child."

To the exceeding consideration, kindness, and generosity of these expressions I felt incapable of making any adequate reply ; I did, however, express something of the gratitude I felt, and then I said, "The portrait, madam, is that of my cousin, with whom I spent much of my time in our childhood, and who is in all respects as dear to me as if he were actually my brother, which relationship has always been acknowledged by us both. Some years since, he left England to enter the military service of a South-American country, to which he was attached. The hair you admired is that of himself, his wife, and their eldest little girl. I have had the brooch two years ; but I never wear it. It has a more sacred office than to adorn : it assists me to endure these years of my separation from those who are dearest to me in this world ; it is too sacred to be used for a purpose which any trinket will answer. During the last few months, having anticipated what you have expressed respecting Caroline, I have permitted myself the weakness to hope again that I might some time go to my brother and sister. I cannot bear the idea that they have lovely children whose infancy has already passed away, and I did not see it ; and whose sweet childish days are fleeting, and, except by the forms which are ever present to my heart, I, who love them so fondly, am a stranger to them."

Mrs. Milford listened to me intently ; it was as novel for her to hear as for me to speak, and the tongue which had lain silent for years could scarcely be quieted now it found a voice.

"But, my dear," said Mrs. Milford, "there are other relationships which it is natural for a woman to hold beside these sacred and blameless ones which you regard so deeply. You will marry, my dear Miss Cameron, and it will no longer be the lament of your heart that you are separated from all who are dearest to you in the world."

I felt nothing that moment but the force of the upstirred sacraments, which for so long had never breathed outer air ; and hearing their echo upon the lips of another, I had no memory for a thought or a feeling foreign unto them.

"I do not believe that I shall marry," I replied ; "*women of my order seldom meet the man to whom they could yield their hearts. I do not suppose that there is my mate reated.*"



Mrs. Milford was astonished now ; not so much at my bold words, as the intensity with which they were spoken.

"Ah, my dear, the time has not come yet. I sincerely hope I shall see you with a husband worthy of you ; and then you shall present me with an ornament like that you have upstairs, and I shall not think it so sacred as to hoard its beauty out of sight,—I shall wear it for the donor's sake."

"In that case you could probably behold the original, when you chanced to be disposed to do so ; and sanctity and solemnity belong to absence, not to the unshorn present," I said lightly.

"I wish, my dear, with all my heart," replied Mrs. Cameron with warmth, "that it may be as you say ; and that you may be married and live so near me that I may see you every day."

Her words brought no deeper colour to my cheeks than had been there before ; but they disturbed the current of the allegiance to the brother and sister I might see no more.

Mrs. Milford went out of the room to make some inquiry for Caroline, and I took the opportunity to retire to my own apartment.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

I hae sworn by my God, my Jeanie,  
And by that kind heart o' thine,  
By a' the stars sown thick owre heaven,  
That thou shalt aye be mine !

BURNS.

On the following morning Mrs. Milford and myself paid our promised visit to Bletchley Hall. The air was exhilarating as we drove along, and we sustained a little running dialogue, as people who are preoccupied often do.

The Hall was about three miles from Findon Rectory. We approached it by a wide carriage-drive, which was secluded by a princely avenue of trees. I thought of *Miss Lucretia* and her avenue. The Hall was a fine old structure, rife with the character of the era which created it. It had "flight of steps to the portico, at each side of which were

two huge stone griffins; fit emblems, it occurred to me, to keep the door of *his* house.

We alighted, and I stood upon the steps to look forth upon the glorious landscape. It was thickly wooded, with villages in the distance,—to each a spiral church. There were waving corn-fields, waiting the harvest, far away on the hill; and that portion of the park immediately below us boasted a lake of no inconsiderable dimensions; while more to the right, among the dotted elm-trees, a large herd of deer were browsing. But Mrs. Milford was waiting for me—I could only catch the whole at a glance. I followed her through the hall, where were a band of sculptured figures, fair stately fabrics, waiting calmly the gaze of an answering genius, which should linger amidst their power and be thankful with a gushing happiness that beauty had not died.

We were shown into a drawing-room, where Mr. Russell directly joined us, and, leading me to the piano, which was standing open, almost before we had exchanged the usual compliments, he requested me to play to him.

"This piano, Mrs. Milford," he said, "is never open unless I open it myself; therefore some supernatural agency, cognizant of the approach of the mistress of melody, has displayed the keys this morning, in pity to you and me."

"Flatterer!" I said; for I was really angry; "this nonsense in Mrs. Milford's presence."

But I sat down to that divine piano—*his* piano; and himself standing composedly and lightly by my side, my fingers wandered over the keys. Sometimes I was praised, at others 'he could not comprehend'—"that was too exalted for him"—"his appreciation of music was not of my order." He produced from the Canterbury drawer odd pieces of paper, with songs, airs, and waltzes upon them. I asked if he played.

"Yes, I play!" he replied abruptly. Then dropping his voice almost under his breath, "the game of life."

I asked no more questions, but rose up. This had not consumed many minutes, although Mrs. Milford had been shut out while it lasted. She sat looking most amiable, and I fancy surveyed the elegant apartment with pleasure, in her matronly experience.

"Mrs. Milford, allow me to give you my arm. I have two or three pictures I wish to show this lady,—both ladies."

I don't know who was compelled to smile beside myself of the party.

In the library to which he conducted us, and an adjoining room, there was a very fine small collection of pictures. There were two pictures, "Peace" and "War," which attracted me the moment I entered the room. They are well known, but I had little experience in fine arts then. The blinding rush of the battle, the shrieking horse and dabbled rider, with the distant bursting of the shell, and the blast-emitting cannon, they spoke to me. I was familiar with battle—it was an attendant upon the history of my life. I saw brave men die in my calm down-sitting at the twilight hour—I was accustomed to the roll of drums, and to banners and plumes.

I did not care so much about the "Peace:" it was pretty, but I would not permit myself to look into it. It was too much like that visionary spot where strange children now rioted, and where pomp and riches went flaunting by, mocking the serenity of my place of graves.

Neither Mrs. Milford nor Mr. Russell talked to me—they left me alone.

I was not aware that she knew me, though this looked like it. And without doubt he did,—yet how?

I examined them all carefully. There was that historical painting which uprooted the tissues of a family in the day on which it elevated its creator to fame. Past the meridian of life too as he was, and winning the affections of a woman so young and fair, to be decoyed away—to be a villain and a dastard in the hour that his genius became immortal. Oh, how sad!

When I saw my companions' patience exhausted, and that they were standing at the open door, I made up my mind reluctantly to rejoin them.

Then we went to look at the gardens, the hothouses, the vineries, and the conservatory adjoining the house, than which I could not imagine anything more admirably finished, and boasting such exquisite plants.

We had made a long call, and our conversation flowed on *lightly and gaily* sometimes; for since he had no more nonsense to say, as I decided some expressions had been, I was at ease and could talk,—sometimes down in the depths, where he

protested he could not follow ; and it was now time to return to the house.

Suddenly he said, " I have some fine stables ; will you, Mrs. Milford, give me five minutes to exhibit them ? "

" Of all things I should like it," I could not forbear saying.

Therefore we went to look at them. Everything was in nice order as we passed through kitchen-gardens and courts, on a near route to the indicated spot. And there were a number of well-ordered grooms about the vicinity of the place.

The clank of the bolt at the end of the halter by which the horses were fastened was a familiar sound to my ears.

I pressed in at the door, and felt disposed to walk up to the head of a tall bay, who, arching his grand neck and stamping his slim legs, stared round inquiringly at the intruders.

And Mr. Russell opening the inner door of a loose box beyond, the horse lying down within so tempted a caress that I stepped in, and should have stooped to lay my hand upon him as he lay, but he gave a shake and got upon his legs. Then I stole up to his head, and laid my arm over his neck, after the manner of my embracing noble coursers of yore, whose fabled manes and fabled riders were alike the remnant of a dream.

" Pretty creature ! brave creature !" so I talked to him, and he laid his nose upon my hand and snuffed guardedly, and treated me as the fleet-limbed Arabian treats the frail little daughter of his master. And the two in the gateway were watching us wonderingly, the one with fear, and the other with pride.

But I must go ; and very soon after we were again in our carriage and driving rapidly home, to be in time for the dinner, which Mrs. Milford very much feared we should keep waiting, to the detriment of her excellent husband.

When had I enjoyed a day as I had enjoyed that day ? Not for years—never before in the same way. And it was because it partook of my past that I did so enjoy it.

The loveliness of the property, and the luxury, and the *gatherings of riches*—joint-offerings of the hand and of the *mind, how fair ! but the vision that charmed me through*

them all, was their affinity to my brother ; for was not he perpetually associated with all that was costly, brilliant, and rare ? He had never been distinct from them, except for that season which it fretted me to think of, and which I did not witness. It had been a revision of the accompaniments of my girlhood, which looked out to me from the hay-racks, the corn-bins, and the pails, I recognized familiarly, as the orderly furnishings, when neither they nor their uses had recurred to me for years.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

“The streams of thought and fancy never rest,  
But quick the ocean of the mind supply,  
Like tribute-currents of the sun-loved west.”

I HAD a letter about this time from Cranston Barton, telling me of the success of one or two of his pictures, and dwelling upon the delight which his engagement afforded him, I thought perhaps in too glowing terms, in contradistinction to his allusion to his family bereavement. But I revoked the sentiment—I was unjust. The business of life cannot go on if its pall is to be carried by mourners. We all have our griefs—deep enough, God knows ; but we must leave them in our hearts ; we must not drag them to the light of every passer-by ; we must work while it is day. The waning hours may find our energies impaired, and we shall have more for which to lament than when in the cool morning we obstructed our gaze, and the gaze of our beloved ones, because, in the ceaseless flow of the river, another boat had gone gliding by, wending its way to another shore, where our own should presently follow. It rejoiced me in my freer thought to hear of Cranston’s happiness in the possession of the young girl’s love. He wrote me word that she was well, and that he saw her occasionally—somewhat seldom ; but they were waiting a securer time, and when it dawned, the remaining link would be placed between them, and their union be consummated.

“Did I foolishly tell you, dear friend,” ran one portion of *this letter*, “that Helen was a beautiful girl ? I hope that I

did not say that. She is differently constituted to the mere beautiful; her face has another character. It is difficult to describe it; but you will see her for yourself, one day, will you not, dear Mary? I fancy if a priest, on the steps of the altar, were about to perpetrate an evil deed, and the memory of some holiness within him called up unbidden in his labouring breast an image of peace and purity to save him from the lurking demon threatening his soul—it would be such a shape and glance as Helen's. And you would not call that *beauty*.

"From the gloomy aisles of the cathedral, where ten thousand cold worshippers kneeling to pray, may not offer among them a single prayer; from the lowest place in the latest company, who approach to break the Communion bread and refresh their souls with its wine, there kneeleth one in whose tortured bosom the peace of heaven hath lawned at last; and over those worshippers—over this woman—will any hang *beauty*? No, Mary! a righteous rebuke and a pitying sympathy, which haunt the air of that temple, are not beauty, but *religion*. Thus is my bride not beautiful, because she is religious; so is it to my fastidious mind—but they say we painters are fastidious ever."

My foreign letters came as they had used to come, and were still to me what they had ever been. I felt to live with them in part from whose bodily presence I was separated by fourteen thousand miles of land or sea. Francisco did not often write; but that did not disappoint me. Maria's letters told me much it rejoiced me to know. I knew, how well! from how much it was absolute that I was cut off, as all are who are absent. But I was content with that I could gain. Little anecdotes of the babies, and her own employments, dropped in with the graver details about her husband; and I felt *aid* at their doings when I laid down one of her simple letters, and loved her more and more. They must have been very happy, those two. She and her children had no residence apart from Francisco, which, in their position, involved great inconvenience and anxiety; for although Lima was the head-quarters of his operations, Francisco's movements at his period were complicated, and transported him constantly about the country. Maria could not understand the intricacies by which infant governments are framed; but she

knew that the young republic was composed of men who, unaccustomed to the tactics laid before them, were raising continually a world of contention, distracting the bond that would build them up. She knew not the depths of her husband's policy, nor the distant goal to which he glanced; but she comprehended enough to see that there was a mighty field for ambition; and that where Bolivar had struggled and triumphed, and yet survived the life of fame ere the death-shadows were due, there was place for another—one mightier than he. And she spread the couch for the cherub forms whom nightly she laid to their repose; and resting in her husband's love, and the promise of their children, hers must have been happiness. It was in answer to a very particular description of Dolores, their eldest daughter, that I made an inquiry as to how, in the future, they proposed to accomplish the education of their children. Before I received a reply to that remark, couched more as an observation than a question (it was a four-months post), a great event had happened to me. Some short time after we called at Bletchley, Mr. Russell had friends visiting him—two gentlemen who came unexpectedly, on their arrival in England from the continent, and who had no objection to inspect his preserves, therefore presented themselves, for the 1st of September, at Bletchley. The three gentlemen dined twice at the Rectory; but I saw no reason to be present at dinner because Mr. Russell partook of it, and it was not my custom to appear at that hour. Mrs. Milford, gravely, and as a matter of course, desired that I would do so; but I declined. During the evening, Mr. Russell did not address me, excepting in a very casual manner, and I concluded that arose from a wish to prevent the strangers making any observations upon his conduct, and I felt piqued; still this partook of a mystery which I loved—I did not want to know him too soon. I was removed from doubt as to what his sentiments were, in one respect, towards me, by the knowledge which comes quickly to a woman; but I ought not to have suffered this strange man to enshroud me with himself, while he was yet far from me; yet I did, *although I shut my eyes sedulously to the sight of the unwomanly captivity.*

*It was in the beginning of October that I was walking to church, on Sunday afternoon; Mrs. and Miss Milford were*

neither of them with me, from some cause which I do not recollect. I had crossed the little field at the back of our house, which led into the lane adjoining the church, when I met Mr. Russell. There was a hand-gate into the lane, through which I was passing, when I saw Mr. Russell walking down the path from the church, meeting me. He bowed, held out his hand to me, and said, "How extraordinary that we two people should meet here together, neither of us, of course, having the slightest desire to do so; but now that we have met," and he relinquished his gaiety of manner, and assumed one of gravity, gentleness, and respect, "if you would permit me the honour of half an hour's conversation with you, I should be glad"—glancing up at the church clock;—"it wants yet some short time to the commencement of the service." Saying which, and before I had any reply ready, he opened the little gate by which I had come, and we turned together to the left, and entered the sycamore copse; which, perhaps, I would rather have avoided, as it led to the Rectory, and servants might pass by it any moment on their way to church; but I was destined then to follow where he led. How grand he looked that day! how decisive his step! how modulated and tender the tones of his voice, above every modulation and tenderness I had ever heard.

"Mary," was the first word he said, "Mary, do you know that I think we love each other."

I thought I had been prepared for any amazement which his speech or manner could give me, but I was not prepared for that commencement. I was yet breathless, when he went on—

"I think you a better match for me than any other woman I have ever met; I thought your face the noblest female face I had ever seen, the first time I saw you, that morning I called after my arrival at Bletchley. I did not know you were the governess then; and when I found that out, which I did accidentally from hearing Mrs. Milford regret that she should ever have to part with you, I set myself to discover who you were, and all about you; but I found I only got farther at sea every step I took. You were walled in by your rectitude, your self-respect, your independence; and the kind woman I deputed to examine you for me, *believed that she told me everything I could want to know, when she won triumphantly, from the loosed tongue of the*



statuary, a confession that there was a somebody whom she loved as a brother."

We were standing now; I was leaning against a young tree, not for support, for it swayed backward with my light touch; he stood about a yard from me, erect, looking into my face; and I, who had not yet spoken, was inhaling every breath of his words, desiring that he might speak on for ever. I had a nightmare lest they should cease to flow forth—those weird sentences.

"And now I believe that this woman is necessary as the breath of life to me; that she was reared for me (somewhere), and is now waiting until I claim her." I looked up with parted lips. "And if she is ready, I will place my hand in hers, and print one kiss upon her brow; and that, the form and symbol of our betrothal, shall be the promise of the mightier bond which shall hereafter be upon our souls, when we shall have married, and have entered upon the life of each other."

I felt already as if a hand were upon me, binding me to him with a strength that stayed my breath. He was mine! the heavens witnessed it, and the garments of the trees, and the still voice of my heart—What need for words? Then he came nearer—I felt that he was *near*—his breath was upon my cheek, the fast heaving of his breast stirred the tresses of my hair, as he took my hand in his and kissed my forehead. Then I knew that this was not a dream, as I had feared before that it had been. I, who was so familiar with the visions of signs, I had taken to the recesses of my sepulchred being a new and choice existence.

Then I leant upon his arm in the delight of my birth-right; and we wandered to and fro in the bower. No servants interrupted. We knew not the hour; only that it was long past that at which we should have been at church. I felt a momentary pang to have superseded by the magnitude of my joy the higher worship which was due from me to a heavenly source of joy. I did not express this to him. He was speaking—I could not have broken in upon him. In after-years I remembered how that the *first vows* which were made by our spirits had intruded on the sanctity of the Sabbath-day. I shuddered over the memory, that our human affections, in stealing the worship

to God, had not been holy from the beginning. Thus, the vows which the Sabbath-day witnessed, the day might have spared from our bliss, begot in the one a mist of infidelity, in the other an anguish of desolation, which seared but did not kill. And thus over my love; the shadow fell—heirloom of the creatures of a tale of change. I could not preserve even the day of betrothal from the blight that obscured it ere my marriage-day could dawn.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

They came around me with their tender hopes ;  
 Their smiles and fondness like a sunbeam's track  
 Lighted my way—an instant ; and the avalanche,  
 Which swept the lode-star from my path,  
 Obscured the sunbeam too.

RECEIVED the sincerest congratulations from the Milfords ;  
 Elvina retracted all her previous criticisms. I entered  
 a fresh bond about the brooch or bracelet, though I  
 stated that he should remain a stranger to the contract.  
 And in the evenings of that autumn, when my duties  
 were completed—for I was proudly careful to leave nothing  
 of my business unfulfilled, I had space to relate to him the  
 story of my lifetime, which he could not learn before  
 giving me his hand. He knew nothing of the family, the  
 name, or the interests of the woman he bade into his home ;  
 that home was splendid, and the name was of centuries,  
 the heart was proud, which awaited me.

I told him once the world was a chessboard, with two  
 of a colour, excepting grey (my single men and women).  
 Pairs go dancing and flying about, some swiftly, some  
 slowly, hither and thither, close to each other, then rushing  
 past ; yet when all the *pirouetting* is over, the answering  
 pairs are at each other's side, whence there can be no defection.  
 This I called the "inconceivable magnetism" which  
 acts people together.

And some there are who, recognizing their own-ship,  
*headlong into the approximating places,"* observed  
*Russell.*

Mr. Russell had occasion to go to London often now ; for though I could not tell in what way, he was always declaring more embellishment was required to fit his house for my home ; and as it was understood that we were to be married in the spring, he professed to have very little space to perfect his preparations. Was I not intoxicated with my new joy ?—Well nigh. The single jar that occurred in the machinery was the taking of this tremendous step unsupported by Francisco. I felt it such a thorough subversion of my resting in them, that I should be going to have another friend as intimate as they, and holding over me a life-long chain, which none of the emergencies which had severed me from them could possibly set aside.

I did not name Mr. Russell in my letters abroad, until I wrote the explicit testimonial that I had yielded up my freedom ; and having done so, like a naughty child, I asked the favour of their countenance. Not that I dreaded my brother's inappreciation of my new character ; on the contrary, I knew Francisco's opinion about *early marriages*, though he did not systematically uphold such sudden ones as his own. But he believed it was strength to the character, as well as purity to the heart, to be united while still quite young to one's life-partner. The upland of fortune trodden together is sweeter when reviewed than if one bore the burden and heat of the day, and the other appeared when the toil was past, and the sun-time also gone. He had no fellow-feeling with those who would wait to gather care and experience (very good things in their way). Why should they who are linked together go dancing off down separate streams, to secure the sweets or the necessities for existence, when together they might gather them equally well ; and being together, far more easily combat the annoyances and the trouble of the way, than if each were wandering unsupported, and far removed from each other's side ! Thus I had heard Francisco reason ; and his was one of those happy marriages, more perfect, except to the eye of love, than he could have deserved. For my judgment was clear as my love was deep ; and Francisco, my brother, dear to my heart with inexpressible tenderness, had not been *faultless*. Over the shade of his defalcation affection drew the pardoning veil, and the one flaw my eyes had detected

had impelled me towards him with mortal sympathy, serving me also as a beacon-light. If he who had been the soul of honour, whose youth was one fair volume dedicated to truth—if he, at the first allurements, had fallen away from the pledge on his lips, and the contract in his heart, how should others with dimmer promise preserve the prestige of constancy? For had he not been betrothed to a maiden, one good and fair, whom without a glance or a word he had placidly put by? True, their parents annulled their engagements; but their secret vows were on their souls—his as well as hers. Yet she, for aught I knew to the contrary, had drooped and faded in the blast of the storm, while he glided joyously along his life-time, hand in hand with another love, as good and as fair as the first. And I never heard that on the surface of his days a single remorse had arisen, much more lingered there. So his transgression was repaid by a blessing, and the tide rolled on.

The total separation of myself and the Raymonds was a great marvel to me: that persons should be so utterly lost to each other, I could not have conceived. It was now nearly five years since that sorrowful day when I met Lucy Raymond in our trouble, and, each unable to console the other, we yet had parted in mutual love; and from that day to this I had not seen her face; nor had I heard of her. But I never forgot her,—she had her place in the cells of my hoarded treasures; and I asked myself if she could be as lovely a woman as she bade fair to be as a girl. I longed to see her again—I believed we should meet again; but I could not guess when or where. I thirsted for the sound of that marvellous voice which had charmed my brother's spirit, leading him captive with its melody before he knew the need of his affections, or was sensible of what he asked or gave. Those calm blue eyes, were they serene as they had been in her childhood? and the hands as fine as when he painted them with an amateur artist's trembling skill? and the grace that had so encircled her, did it remain? and the loftier majesty of the deep-souled woman converge and enhance it all?

Ah! yes, it did; and I saw the radiance soon enough, and *felt the innate spell*; and, seeing and feeling, I no longer wondered that women held spirits in their train, which

according to *their* desire for weal, or *their* bend to wickedness, illumed or destroyed the nations. The years which marked this our first separation was the clinging foam of a crystal sea, which dissolves in meridian sun; the life-long severance that followed after, was the ebbless waters of a mighty gulf, which never her foot could cross to me, or mine repossess to join her. The shores of that gulf, unfathomable, could not be brought together; they who stood on the opposing banks were dead to each other.

On one of Mr. Russell's returns from London, he attempted a battle, in the like of which he was always worsted. It was one of my whims to accept no gifts from him. I did not want gifts at the hand of him who had given me himself—I wanted no trifles to establish the existence of that which was between us. It had been a debate with us on several occasions, and I now found that his spirit of perseverance was in practice again. He had a craving to contest points in which he knew he met his equal, and might make use of every weapon, since I was guarded at all points; and the victory, whichever gained, was sure to be hardly won.

He walked over by the star-light—it was now Christmas time, and, entering upon my solitude (for I generally sat alone after dinner, it had become such a natural thing that he should spend the evenings with me), coming in with much gravity, a sign that an attack was at hand, he seated himself and began to detail the various intelligences he had brought back from London.

It was just then a very exciting time, for the Ministry was defeated; and notwithstanding that the Opposition triumph was very unpalatable throughout the country, and confidence in the Premier, by the mass, unshaken, the dissolution of Parliament must take place, and the sense of the people be taken; and occurring at this particular juncture, it was a most exciting period. All Europe was on the *qui vive* to know whether or not the loyal Englishman was to be swept from his footing, whose probity Britain's foes dreaded, whose name was the ugliest nightmare of continental schemes; who with toil and energy, year by year, *had helped on* the wheel of the state, while, enveloped in the *dust of the road*, he took no seat in the cumbrous vehicle, but *remained where* prudence and patience placed him, in his

proud humility, till the moment he foresaw for years, when the mettlesome steeds, flushed with power and good living, were breaking away from the driver's hand, threatening that car which was hitherto secure, an upset, like the cars that were seen on the road ; whose gilded trappings were sadly soiled by the dust which they had contracted, while the persons who lately rode, were thrown over and trodden under-foot, and the vehicle rolled on with strange and barbarous leaders, sometimes skilful, sometimes rude, sometimes impotent, but driving ever away from out the reach of the fallen,—wise too late.

When this noble gentleman—two-thirds of his progress past—perceived the dangers by the way, and the incapacity of their hands who curbed the prancing steeds, he hesitated no more, but rising to his towering height and rearing his stately head, he met the eye of the royal lady, whose the carriage was ; and she was able to discern that the eagle eye was clear, even as the toil-worn hand was firm ; and she liked also the sound of his voice—she had heard it from afar, and she forgot that the hair was silvery that floated over the noble brow, the single sign that the stalwart frame had walked many a mile ; and she laid her white and sceptred hand on the gallant veteran's shoulder, and said that she trusted in his care the steeds and the stately car. And he took the reins and seated himself with the consciousness of power, and he held nothing in *his* hand but difficulty and trust. No wine refreshed *him* as he moved along—he stayed not to pick the gems, which sparkled along the route, and which others lost their ride, descending to secure. The smile on the virtuous lady's face encouraged him, and his true heart bore him up.

But they whom he commanded were an irregular band, frail without or false within, and it vexed the ruler to guide them ; some were on fame, and some on riches bent, and many only laboured for themselves ; while by the pathways ever raced along a fractious company ; their hurrying steps, loud voices, and disordered robes, a constant worry to the inmates of the car. And they were always by, because the pathway was their right ; though no other portion of the road was theirs, unless they could dislodge, as more than once had happened, the occupants of the car ; when all changed places. But it was a grievous change, and sorely

tried the well-disposed in heart, and brought a shadow on the lady's face, although she did not frown :—all were alike her subjects ; still those around were a disordered crew.

So while this gentleman disposed his strength as materials would permit him, and neither internal imbecility nor external aggression could age the face of her who watched her husband and her little children, listening joyously amid her thoughts, the recreation in her businesses, for the light bugle-note of her returning lord from brake and glen (he did not touch the crown upon her brow, he only lived securely in her heart); and gallant princes laid their snow-white plumes, their unstained spurs and fresh imperial banners, immortal names, hereditary glory, and their own bright promise,—so many tributes of surrounding realms, praying the sovereign lady of the isles to lay these offerings at her daughters' feet—their guerdon, hope, and trust, to clasp those infant hands hereafter, subject to her people's wish. While thus the life, full of such mighty purpose, progressed on, one had arisen from the noisy travellers who rioted along the bank. His was a comely form, tall and erect, and, viewed from out the distance, he appeared more worthy than his fellows ; but drawing near, you saw his eager eyes,—brightly they sparkled, on more mischief bent than the creatures of his kind. And though his voice was clear and sweet, ravishing those around, you, who, attracted by his tones, attend, perceive he speaks a lie. And elbowing through their ranks ever advancing (they see not his drift), he strives perpetually to reach the front—he wishes none before him ; but biding the resumption of the better points by his thickset countrymen, he wastes not silently advancing hours ; but raising high his voice from time to time, and dashing back his Israelitish hair, he sends forth ringing accents on the breeze, filling his comrades' ears, and reaching those who ride afar. And this deceptive creature, with a battered fame and lips grown thin with jealousy, *he* thinks to chafe the free, pure spirit of that high-born man who rules the state ! “ He fit to govern ! ’tis a goodly man deserves well of his country ; *but he occupies a false position.* The Tory head of a Radical administration, he cannot redress internal grievances, he cannot wield the weapon of the nation. Compelled to turn *his mind to foreign policy*, it is turbulent and aggressive

thereby increasing national taxation, national expenditure, and neglecting national requirements!" Viper! can *he* distract the patriot's devotion, or wake the doubt or the suspicion in the men himself pronounces a nation strong in its institutions, animated by glorious traditions, and aspiring to future excellence? No, sir! put by the rapier in its scabbard, fit blade for you! and place a stop upon the lips which, lying, do not deceive. *His* fame—*his* reputation—*you* cannot touch them.

But Mr. Russell's combat with my whim; when we had done with politics, we fell upon other subjects; for though a woman, and detesting the systematic female politician, I yet plead guilty to a great interest in gleaning their doings, whose names are bandied about the press, and on every wandering tongue, till we can only distinguish the particular stars in the crowding constellations, and can with vast difficulty judge what they are, by what they do. However, passing from their merits or demerits, as the case seemed to each, my lord produced a package from his pocket, large and cumbersome. He was my lord; I never thought of him in any other light. It was not suitable to him or me that he should be my lover—that belonged to the simple days, the childlike days of yore; this was the grand reality—the majesty!—the glory!

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

Is there a pang like *that*, that thrills the heart,  
When bitterness comes o'er it from the lips it loves?

"MARY, these are for you, and it is resolved that you shall wear them; because I never yet heard of a queen who did not one day wear a crown, or a woman who loved an honest man, who would not manifest her choice at his will, early or late. Now it is a long time, my antelope, since I met with you in the forest, and if you are long in coming to my lair, it is no fault of mine. Morning and night my hoofs are sore with walking in your van."

"Not mornings, sir."

"No matter how dense the pines and cedars are, where



you thrust your stately head, I follow after ; and I think it a pity if I can't hang so much as a bit of fern upon your antlers, of all I toss down with mine in my eagerness to reach you."

"Upon my word, sir, you carry yourself proudly ; who desired another decoration there, or a single purchase more than was already at Bletchley before I entered ?"

"You entered when I entered myself. You did not wait for me to summon you. You walked right up to your destiny, even meeting me in the church lane."

This was irresistible.

"Mary, you will not despise these jewels. I ask it as a favour."

"I never despise gems, sir, when they are real."

He bowed.

"But I never encourage inconsistency, and it sits upon you with a very bad grace to ask favours ; I have seen that before to-night."

"I never asked a favour of you in my life, you know that I never did ; to-night is the exception. I did not ask you to marry me ; I simply told you, which you knew before, that it appeared to me we loved each other."

"I have not forgotten it."

"Then why are you so inexorable, Mary ? If you don't forget that, and acknowledge the fact, why will you not please me in this thing ? You always are so imperious ; you ride over me ! I firmly believe you consider me dust, made for you to step upon. I declare you are laughing ! Defend me, ye powers ! from a laughing woman. It has always annoyed me to see women laugh since I was a boy ; so unclassical, so unnatural, such a falling off their pedestal. To think of a beautiful woman laughing, distorting her perfect mouth. And now that I have seen P—— N——, with her incessant simper, how the deuce it is the fellows in the pit don't throw something at her, I can't tell—low life I understood was vulgar. However, she smirks and dances as she did twelve months ago, and the coronets and the fans are just as delighted as on the first night of her bursting upon them—heigho ! and the elegant Italians, who really are *worth a sensible person's scrutiny*, bestow their *Terpsichorean charms* on the empty tiers and plebeian incense ; and so the

world goes round. Mary, you are not a beautiful woman, though I suppose you believe you are. No doubt many men have told you so ; the egregious impertinence and effrontery of the ignorant is proverbially amazing, especially addressing itself to women, who are constitutionally vain. I was tossing over some new book which I found the other day ; it proved to be Miss Strickland's ninth or tenth volume—no matter—of the 'Queens of England ;' and I lighted upon a similarity of passages in all the pages I looked at. There was James the Second's daughter, 'the young beautiful Mary of England !' reiterated till one supposed that the Princess of Nassau's eternal charms must have shone out the only charms in universal ugliness. Said I, 'If women are thus to lend themselves to flatter the vanity of their sex, my old dyspepsia at the sound of authoresses was a legal sentiment, and I'll take it up again in defiance of contending tastes.'

"But you are a noble, good-looking woman. You won't disgrace the Woburn Collection. You will not look down from the dusty walls with an angel or a martyr face, perpetually causing a man to shudder over human wickedness, making one feel that whatever one's day, we wish we had lived in yonder time, to have strangled the king upon his throne before the eyes of Southampton's daughter, praying, labouring, struggling for her peerless husband's life, the cold-hearted tyrant smiling on, with his sensual eyes on her glorious form, and his crown on his brow, and her lord in his prison, and we unborn ! No, Mary ! you are only a woman ! a woman who has learned to live and who is preparing to die ; to whom all conflicting things are so many spokes in the wheel of time, to be worked as best they may, but never beguiling beyond their rightful space. There is nothing of the angel about you—there will be by-and-by—the holy and virtuous wife, and the pure and tender mother ! I am very unworthy of you, Mary. I should be sorry to survive you, dear ; but if it were so, I hope I should comport myself as became *your* life. Yes ! I am unworthy of you ; but if you love me, you will put up with me, short-comings, failings, and all. I can't think what you want to wait for ; I am ready. The sea remains, notwithstanding our betrothal, and the ships that sail over *her* will take their time ; they will not tarry or haste.

Why not let your Spanish cousin's approval bless the bridal as well as the vows?

"As you are so eager to introduce me to the acquaintance of his moustache (I fear there will be a rivalry—I had better arrange that on our landing—mine be an incipient one), I have a decided impression we shall 'pale 'neath each other's lustre.' And, morally speaking, there isn't the remotest probability of we two men agreeing. Of course it is understood that we quarrel outright upon short acquaintance; therefore, better arrange that the meeting, at all events, may be friendly. I never liked foreigners;—and a man who resigns his name! Bah! the thing is intolerable. Besides, the idea of a parcel of fellows snapping and snarling at each other's lands. To be sure there's nothing else for them to do. Impoverished unfortunates! Their grandfathers were white slaves, if they were not black ones, and the negro mantle and the bigot mantle are one and the same heritage. It's to be regretted there are not some glorious creatures to rise up and people that gorgeous land, till the soil of that teeming territory, work the mines that lie unconceived, treading the glades of primeval forests; whose women might sit on the fruit-hung banks of yon magnificent rivers, and teach their children, whose fathers were men, what it is to be great and free! You need not look so intractable; I am not confining myself to Peru, unfortunate that she is, notwithstanding the world-wide aphorism, 'Peru with all her gold!' And to do you justice and your prejudices, I believe Bolivar was a useful man—a man of valour—a great captain; and had he not been of Spanish blood, he would have done good; but he knew no more how to manage a state, much less a raw republic—not so well as you would have known, Mary. But I give him his due, he is the Washington of South America (for want of a better man); and I question if they will see his peer in another generation.

"Seriously, Mary, I am sorry to annoy you, or rather I should be with a different taste. As it is, it pleases me to *anger* you, I delight to see you moved; and at this *interesting stage* of the conversation, when I am quite sure to *gain the day*, since you would not suffer a passing ill-humour to destroy your admiration of diamonds, allow me to present

my tigress with a chain which even she may wear. I shall require a necklet, it is my private opinion. My bay horse's mouth, whose neck you once condescended to span, is at this moment exhibiting the effects of a bridle which he resisted, but to which he was obliged to submit. Madame, these bracelets are not unbecoming, please to permit me to clasp them upon your delicate wrist."

"I shall not accept them, Mr. Russell ; therefore you can spare yourself that trouble."

He laid the bracelets down upon the table, and leaned back in his chair. The gaze he fixed upon me fastened into my soul. I continued, as heretofore, to work at my braid chain, the which was the second of the kind, simple and inexpensive as they were, he had taken possession of, to wear with his watch, in place of his costly chain. Though I fought, and resisted, and struggled, and could have died with anger at exhibiting such weakness, the large hot tears would roll over my cheeks. Loving him as I loved him, not a word of his lips, not a single breath, but fell with weight upon me ; and this was the first time that wantonly he had wounded my feelings, and he had done it to the quick. All that vivid picturing, those flowery thoughts, they were but so many daggers with which his words rooted themselves into my memory. I might live a hundred years, but should I ever forget the cutting irony of his lash, levelled at my idolatry ? Would Bolivar's name ever meet my ear, or the wastes, the minerals, the rivers of South America be mentioned in my hearing, and I not see among their wilds the race of soul-clad warriors, whose wives, beneath banners of the banian-trees, taught splendid children to be great and free ? And all the weird worship with which he entwined it, the love of his heart which stood beside the lash of mind and brain, was no consolation. And I was assured that he did not hold this which he had revelled in ; not he ; he believed, he knew perfectly, as well as I, that "in the sea, whence fine fish are taken, others remain as fine ;" he knew that by Bolivar's grave a celestial flame had been kindled. He knew that the brave, the earnest, the true, were banding together to make their country what a free country should be ; for it was free now from foreign dominion ; and that it was not so in preceding generations was their misfortune

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not their fault. He knew that the ancient memory of Peruvia, before her tyrants came, was dear and sacred on their lips and hearts; but kingdoms are not framed in a day, and a world of selfishness, littleness, unworthiness, runs through every nation under the sun; therefore, there could be no present glory sufficient to have honour at this early day—the rest would follow. Far away, down the vista of years, his eye saw as mine saw, their princely cities flourishing with merchandise, their country in a prosperous peace, as the proudest in the eastern hemisphere. Their men were now as brave, their women were as fair—an infant republic's boast; and not in the courts and camps of Europe was more promising mind, and a gallanter hand, than among that rising people. Oh! it was cruel, it was petty, thus to put forth his strength! I endured the sharpest mortal agony in the moments we sat speechlessly.

He was touched by my tears, for it was the first time he had seen me weep. When I related to him the incidents of my childhood, and recorded the anguish of a later day, with the trials which succeeded it, I shed no tears; the bygone sorrow had lost its poignancy speaking itself to him. He had been born into the world of my being, and the waves of tribulation that had burst over my head were half lost in the weight of my new-born love; for since I was taken into his strong arms, what remained to me of grief? But now the torrent of my tears, sealed up for long, burst forth resistlessly their fountains. I shook with the tempest; but it could not last long. He waited until I had recovered myself—I who was never overtaken by such folly, and who scorned young ladies' tears.

He attempted to take my hands, and he did take my braiding away and pushed it back upon the table.

"Mary, how can you do this? What is the meaning of it all? What is the matter with you? I have not been the cause; I have said nothing to wound your feelings (except that you are not beautiful). I don't like to see you so, Mary—*my* Mary."

I laid my head on his shoulder, for the weakness of fondness is vast. I could have died for him, I loved him so utterly,—as he leaned there, with the knife not yet out of his hand. What I felt for him, what I still feel, what I

shall ever feel, passes all human understanding. In that hour of my passion, mingled rage and mingled grief, I loved him only better than before.

He absolutely took up the jewels as they lay upon the table ; he clasped the necklet round my throat, with its blazing pendent cross ; he fastened the bracelets round my arms, each of them worth a dower ; and he took the bandeau out of its bed, and would have placed it upon my red and swollen brows, but that was too much (there was a tale connected with his possession of such valuable jewels)—I put it away, and he did not resist me ; and then I unclasped the necklet and the bracelets, and, drawing the case towards me, I arranged them all in their velvet and satin niches ; and locking the case, I put the key into his waistcoat-pocket, whence I had often taken his watch to affix or alter those guards. And thus he was beaten.

There was never any explanation between us of what occurred that night. It struck me suddenly that it must be very late ; I was ashamed to think how late. He must have felt that also at the moment, for he started up.

"Mary," he said, holding out his hand, "if you would wear one gift of mine, I should be satisfied. I would not care what it was—how rich or paltry ; but it is a wish with me."

"You can bring me a turquoise ring," I said, "and place it yourself upon my finger, where it shall remain to the day of my death, and I shall wish it to be buried with me. Now go—this moment !"

He took me in his arms and kissed me ; he uttered no other word, but departed instantly. I took up my candle and ran upstairs, thankful to encounter none of the servants—the family were gone to bed.

## CHAPTER XXX.

There was a time, I need not name,  
Since it will ne'er forgotten be,  
When all our feelings were the same  
As still my soul hath been to thee.

BYRON.

WE never recurred to that night ; it was as if it had never been, externally. I loved him increasingly,—he was fair and perfect in my sight.

He brought me the turquoise ring, and I have it on my finger now,—six blue stones, and a tiny diamond shining in the centre, with a box at the back containing a bit of his black hair.

Mrs. Milford told me that she was going to give an entertainment more stylish than was her wont ; in part to introduce her daughter, in part as a compliment to Mr. Russell on his settling in the neighbourhood, and partly, she kindly added, to show her high regard of me. I knew many of those who were invited, slightly, and some of them I liked. I expected for myself an amount of criticism commensurate with the sensation caused by the recent announcement of Mr. Russell's engagement to me. He was a distinguished person, who might have married one of their daughters, with a great name, a well-sustained title, or a large fortune ; but he had chosen *me*. Of course I was an object of curiosity, and it was not unpleasant to myself to show them my betrothed. All times and places were alike to me when he was by my side. The meadows, the banquet-room, the bower, even the church, so he was there, all the rest was nothing to me. And so I wished neither to hasten nor retard my second gala night.

I had never entered any ball-room since that ball-room long ago, when Francisco had placed the lilies in my hair, to resemble Lucy Raymond's ; and Edward had led me through the mazy dances, and my father had smiled the while, seven years gone by. I remember I did not know what I would

wear when I ran upstairs at a late hour to dress to receive the guests, for from first to last of that evening Mrs. Milford paid me marked attention, and wished me to be ready to receive with herself each guest.

It was a white robe I had worn on my seventeenth birthday—that would not suit me now. I went to the wardrobe, where dresses, in my untidiness, were always carelessly hung. There was only one there which I had never put on ; it was a rich maize silk, glacé, and shot with white ; decorated with purple flowers upon the bosom, sleeves, and skirt, with a quantity of simple tulle, and no other accompaniments. That dress would do ;—I put it on. And now for a head-dress. I found a coronet of pearls, fastened upon black velvet, with black ribbon velvet at the back, streaming to the waist. That also would suffice. I wore the ring of tiny pearls, the last gift of Edward Raymond, hoarded all these years. I could not have parted with that ring, or worn it upon ordinary occasions, the massive gold ring with Francisco's hair, and bearing the initials of his name, and the turquoise ring, which, sleeping or waking, was always in its place ; these were the gems upon my hand ; and, with a bracelet that had been my mother's, and a necklet with Lillie's fair hair, were my embellishments. I saw no change in the shining dark ringlets I arranged by the lamplight that New Year's Eve, to those my fingers had tremblingly twined when Lillie stood smiling by my side, and my lover was waiting outside my threshold, and Francisco turned from the girl he loved to tell me I was his own bright sister, in the summer-time long ago ; and satisfied with my personal appearance, and longing, thirsting to be seen by him, I descended to the drawing-room. I was greatly amazed to find him already there, and alone in the apartment. He was at all times *distingué*. I was in the habit of believing that no costume or circumstances affected him ; but I was compelled candidly to admit that, being dressed with unusual care, I could appreciate its improvement. There is, however, but little variation in gentlemen's evening attire.

He wore his chain and my guard too ; the shining mass for the eyes of the world, the invisible silk for mine. He was standing upon the rug, with his face to the fire, so that I only saw his back as I crossed the floor. Of course he



knew my step, and of course, as another man would have done, he did not turn round to receive me. Nor did he give any start of surprise, or betray any emotion, such as well-brought-up people are generally supposed to feel. I advanced to his side, and linking one hand on his arm, I laid my other on his shoulder, and thus held that which was my property. He si- looked at my face then, saying, "How are you?"

"How are *you*?" I replied.

"Well, dear." And we relapsed into silence; spoke no more, but standing together, until the door opened. Mr. Milford came in, and shortly afterwards his wife and a pupil, and in quick succession the guests began to arrive.

Then Mrs. Milford constantly appealed to me, and hovered close by my side. As each arrival attracted attention, he made his compliments and returned to his seat. He was so tall, and courtly too, and moved with such grace; ah, there was no one else like him! My heart was dancing in the pride of its pleasure low down below, while my face was tranquil and mirrorless. He told me afterwards.

After an hour, when the room was filled, and I thought every one had come, there was a movement in the hall which I caught myself listening.

*Was it the fall of the foot-print that reached my ear, the ticking dial of my destiny that told the hour!* I looked up with an eager, anxious gaze; and though, when the servant threw open the door, announcing Captain and Mrs. Oliver and Miss Raymond, I could have fallen on the floor in a faint, yet I did not feel surprise. The feeling had its name, by which I was oppressed.

On she came. Yes! it was she. I should have known her among ten thousand. *There* was the step, the quick, firm, the eyes like stars, the golden hair more radiant than of old. She, too, wore jewels in her hair, and a more elegant dress than on that other night. There was no great change, which time had wrought, that I could name. *She* was changed. Her girlish beauty had been pale and faded compared with what I now saw, a magnificent woman's beauty. And she swept on—every one seemed to know her; gentlemen thronged to give her place, and she bowed her head, and now and then she smiled, and the smile al-

not so sweet as the fresh smile of her youth. I wondered when she would see me; that she would recognize me I knew. I took my eye from her to speak a word to Mr. Russell; he was gazing so earnestly upon the spot where she stood—he had evidently not seen her before—that I was obliged to speak twice to him before he heard. Then, with a start, he bent down to me; but before I could speak, I saw her arrested steps; a marble paleness spread over her face, and I saw her eyes grow glassy. How would she behave?

How, indeed? She recovered herself instantly, and, smiling (she had not smiled when she first beheld me), she walked up to me, holding out her hand. And the colour had returned to her cheek, her hand did not tremble, and there was not a quiver in her voice, as she said (how that marvellous voice subdued me), "Dear Mary, how happy I am to meet you!"

Had *she* been agitated, I should have supported my part with dignity and strength, the force of contrariety; but, as it was, I was overcome; too much so, indeed, to evade the observation of the company, who might not have detected the momentary agitation in her had I coldly comported myself. But to see her *thus*—to be so forcibly reminded of the day when Francisco had said, in his boyish madness, "Mary, I wish she was an empress, that she might trample upon us all!" I could scarcely bear it.

But *he* was kind. He diverted the attention of the guests; he left me alone; she passed on, and took a seat by Mrs. Milford, and he was standing before me.

After a time we went into the room which had been prepared for dancing. Mrs. Milford was not fond of these parties; this was an exception to anything I saw during my residence at Findon. An excellent band had been provided, and there was, as we entered, a blaze of light and elegance.

I did not care to dance, for he seldom danced; I had never seen him dance, and I had often heard him say he detested dancing. But he would do me honour. Sir Philip Malden had engaged Caroline for the two first dances. He led my pupil to the head of the room, and, without remark, *Mr. Russell took my hand, and placed me opposite them with himself.*

I saw *her*—that beautiful woman! How unlike the name of Lucy! She danced with a fine man, many years her senior. I followed the stately steps of my lord, and the stately steps of Miss Raymond, and I found myself comparing their separate bearings, and placing them together as partners. We did not join in the waltz which succeeded this dance. I had leisure to observe that the old inimitable grace clung to her still. No other ever danced as she—that heaving, undulating movement. But why that silvery-streaked hair so near her face, as her hand rested so lightly upon the grave gentleman's shoulder. Oh, it was not such a beautiful sight, with all her glory, as it used to be, when young feet sped along with hers, and an arm slight, but privileged, held fast the waist men now scarcely presumed to touch.

"When did you know that lady, Mary?" spoke his voice at length.

"Oh! I have known her all my life; it is as if we had never been parted." And yet the moment I had uttered these words I was aware of their fallacy.

That grand-looking lady was not my Lucy, my little Lucy, whose head had lain on my bosom, and for whom I had wept. Then, her arms were round my neck, and she could scarcely leave me. Who would then have believed we should ever be an hour in one room, yet barely speak, and but once approach each other?

Something of this, no doubt, occurred to him; for he replied, "Really, you do not appear the most intimate of friends!"

How strange for him to be animadverting between me and Lucy Raymond.

"However," he said, "she's a beautiful girl; you must introduce me, Mary."

I felt a quivering at my heart as he said this. Of course, it was not jealousy; I was not such a fool. What was she to him? And was he not *my* own? Were we not already married, in all but the latest bond?

But I felt as if I would rather that he should not touch *her hand*. I felt as if I could not suffer him to address *her*. This was monstrous; I felt it so.

"Of course," I said, "with pleasure."

I had never uttered such a lie as those two words—altogether the spirit of a lie, since they were spoken to deceive.

When the waltz was over, I saw her speak to her partner, and he immediately led her to where we were sitting.

I felt the old uncontrollable tenderness come over me towards her. I could have flung my arms round her, and showered kisses upon her in presence of them all. I loved her! I loved her still! of course I did; why not?

She had lain quite sacred in my heart through unforgetful years; and now she had quietly come back again; of course I loved her still! She gave a long, curious glance at him, as she came along the room; and as soon as she was sufficiently near, I held out my hand; and taking it, she placed herself beside me.

Then I turned to the man upon my right hand, and to the woman upon my left, and I said, "You two, most beloved by me of the creatures of your sex, be friends!"

And they each stretched out a hand, and I joined them together. Yes! I joined them; they could never more be parted. The mantle of my love upon both their heads, drew their hearts together, and they were one.

Lucy said that my peculiar introduction, so forcibly recalling myself, made her at home with me again; "for," she said, "I did think, when I first saw you to-night, we should not now be able to be friends; you are so altered, Mary."

"Is she so altered, Miss Raymond? In what way, may I ask? But, first, you should say how long it is since you met."

"How long since we met! Ah, it is half a lifetime—is it not, Mary? I have forgotten how long."

"It is six years," I said.

"Six years!" he exclaimed; "and where, by all that is mysterious, did you meet before?"

"Do you not know we were born in the same village, or nearly so?" said Lucy, wonderingly; she was surprised that a single portion of my experience should have been withheld from him. I already saw that she pronounced him worthy. But she did not know that her name alone had not passed my lips to him, because her name was connected with the flaw in Francisco's conduct; and I did not tell my

brother's fault, even to my affianced husband. So he had not heard of Lucy Raymond ; and the reflection must have been as remarkable in his mind as it was in hers.

"No !" he replied, "I did not know. Mary never told me about you."

She looked at me half reproachfully ; and I again saw the tears that gathered, but did not fall.

"Oh Lucy !" I said, "there are things which must be blotted out. I would not blot away the thought of you that I can never do ;—but the scenes in which I was accustomed to behold you are erased."

Her voice trembled, as I did not think her voice could tremble now.

"Do not speak of it, dear ; it was too dreadful."

She thought I was alluding to my lost home. I was alluding to Francisco's love.

"And how," I asked, "have you lived since we parted ?"

"I don't know," she replied, wearily. "Of course one has to visit a great deal ; and I being an only daughter, so many engagements devolve upon me ; and papa is getting in years now !"

"Getting into years !" I repeated ; "that fine, hale man ! It was so extraordinary to hear of a person who had been so long dead to me. The next most extraordinary thing was seeing herself. Whom would she name next ?"

"You forget it is some time since you saw papa."

"Ah yes," I replied ; and I sighed.

"What a sigh, Mary !" was Mr. Russell's exclamation.

"Upon my word, I shall ask Miss Raymond whether there was not some knight of romance, some young gallant with a wonderful name, who lived somewhere there. I hear you heave such a sigh as that, one would think ; had some time broken your heart, and had not built it up again."

My face burned ; and Lucy gazed from one to the other with undisguised surprise. I had recounted the history of my early engagement, months since, to my betrothed ; but he had not chanced to ask the name of him, my young companion ; nor had I thought to give it. Men of the world are not curious about names, when they listen to a story not like young girls, who will have dates also. They take

wide and general view of what is brought before them ; and to such minutiae as names and places, under such (to them) simple circumstances as these, they do not care to particularize.

Lucy compressed her beautiful lips, and the smile went out of her face. There was something not clear between us, she thought, and she felt sorry. She probably thought us a goodly pair ; he so distinguished and devoted, and I calm and fond ; and both of us proud. Of course, she read that we were these at a glance. None deceived her ; she had early learned of me to decipher character ; and, doubtless, she regretted that, with such elements for enjoyment, any veil, however mist-like, should be between our hearts.

But there *was* no veil between our hearts. She could not quite see them. I had not thought to hide a particle. It was not by desire I secreted the name of Lucy Raymond ; it was because it did not occur to me to mingle the tale of my brother's inconstancy with my revelations to my lord. I was a faithful sister, as I was a loyal mistress ; and it was my nature, not my resolve, that shrouded the name of Raymond from Mr. Russell's heart, till it could be shrouded thence no longer, until it established itself there.

Mr. Russell danced no more that evening. One sight I am spared. I never saw those creatures hand-in-hand, except in the clasp which my own united. I never saw his arm encircle her, or her beautiful hair upon his breast, I am thankful !

I danced several times, at the request of Mrs. Milford, with her most intimate friends ; and Lucy danced also, lightly and tirelessly, with the most elegant men in the room. And we knew not how it was we had met, or if we should ever meet again ; and had exchanged absolutely nothing ; yet the hours were passing ; they would soon be gone, and no one was to blame.

I heard Mrs. Rivers's carriage announced, as I at first heard her name, and I saw the stately Earl of Elmsley place the soft cloak on the round white shoulders, whiter than the silk robe beneath, or the lace that fell over it ; I felt her kiss me where I stood, by the open ball-room door, and her eyes rested on Mr. Russell, almost pleadingly.

*Was she committing my happiness into his princely care ? or was she crying with her spirit-voice to be taken into his*

love? He bowed to her as she said "Farewell!" And she stepped out into the night, and her carriage-wheels rolled from the door.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

The night is chill, the forest bare;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?

COLERIDGE.

I DID not receive my expected letter until the middle of February,—the reply to my announced engagement. And somewhat singular it appeared to me then—but so it is; a mother's feelings must be all-surpassing—before Maria entered for herself and her husband upon the subject of my marriage, she wrote minutely about her children's future, in answer to my own allusion to them, as to how, with her family increasing, she would be able to keep them with her, in the uncertainty of Francisco's movements. She told me she was becoming very anxious about her little girls; she could scarcely devote as much time to Dolores as she ought to have now; and with regard to their education in a few years' time, she could only suppose that they must be sent to England. It was rare for a twelvemonth to go by without fighting and bloodshed in the republic, which was not yet strong enough to defy its foes; and as it was, her children suffered from their changes of residence,—for wherever her husband was, in camp or city, Maria chose to be, although their residence was always prepared for them in Lima, and they passed much occasional time there, in the midst of luxury. Maria's fortune had been very large, doubling the first expectations of Francisco, which was a happy circumstance, meeting the sacrifice of a part of his; and his family estate in Southern Peru was no mean heritage: consequently they were reasonably wealthy; and De la Vega was the only officer who at that time received from the state no pay for military service. Francisco de la Vega coveted more than *money* in return for labour.

The sending their children to Europe, Maria went on to say, was an idea from which she shrunk while they were yet so young; still, much would depend upon an opportunity

of sending them over. "And coming to you, our sister," she wrote, "I could have no anxiety apart from a parent's pain in their absence, because they would pass from one mother's hand only to another. It is as if the home prepared for you were prepared also for them." So impossible it appeared to Francisco and Maria that, coming to England, their children could be elsewhere than with me; and so I felt it, though I confess I gave a start; for the idea was new. And that wretched conversation flashed upon my mind—that only jar in our fervent peace.

"Francisco and I are pleased, dear sister, at the thought of your marriage, since it is your choice. I will say we were surprised when we had the letter, for Francisco has always said, from time to time, 'When will Mary come out to us?' expecting you here; but I hope, as it now is, we can come to England. My husband said he would write; he is busied always. You know he loves you, if he sends no letters. I wish that I could see you preparing your dresses, and all so pretty. You will be a very beautiful bride, Mary; it is a pity we shall not see you. And I am glad you have a rich husband,—it is right for you to be rich. I think of my piccaninies! (I have no better English word.) I cannot bear to speak of parting; perhaps they may remain. Remember to tell me all things about the husband; I wish very much to know of him. I hope he is a handsome man. My boy has a face like his father's.

"Your sister,

"MARIA."

There was a postscript in the firm hand, such a contrast to the dear little trembling characters of the rest of the letter:—

"I congratulate you, Mary, since you have found a mate, —right noble I know he is; I hold out to him the right hand of fellowship. He is a brave man and true, if you respect him; I wish there were more of them on this side the water. You know that we desire you all the happiness you can desire yourself. Write all particulars. We are likely to be again at loggerheads with the Bolivians. I am not sure, if there was a good opportunity, that we might not send the children to Europe in a year or two's time. It is bad for Dolores and Josepha to be with us; but the



are babes, older, however, than your English damsels at their age. My son is a splendid fellow, as handsome as his mother. I hope he may make a better man than his father.—Yours ever, “FRANCISCO DE LA VEGA.”

My Peruvian letters had generally caused revolutions within me ; but they had always righted about, after a time. These epistles would not. And I no longer had any excuse for postponing my marriage ; this he said when I read to him the mentions made of him, and he behaved in a wild, curious manner, which in anybody else would have been incomprehensible,—and *commanded* me now to fix the day of our marriage. I think never had he loved me so much. The small speck evoked by our remarks on the night I saw Lucy Raymond had not shaken his trust ; upon our security is was but a drop to the ocean. We rarely talked now ; it was as if nothing more remained to be discussed between us, so perfect was our communion. We never had any impetuous warring of words, however well-defined, to make contests now. He said to me one day, the day before my letter reached me, “I have nothing to say to you, Mary !” it had come to that. And I lay down and rose up with him only on my heart.

Lucy Raymond must have been visiting in the neighbourhood, and have left it immediately. I did not see her again, nor did he ; nor did either of us speak of having seen her at all, which in our relationship was a remarkable circumstance ; it was a tacit acknowledgment of a mystery about her which taught us both to forbear breathing her name in the ears of each other. I had nothing to urge against his wish for our immediate marriage ; and I suppose I was unlike other young ladies, judging from the love-stories I hear or read, for I said presently,—that is, when I was sufficiently amused with the odd sentiments he emitted,—“that the 2nd of March had been an era in my life, and I would be married on that day.”

“Good !” said Mr. Russell.

Then I began to talk to him about Francisco’s children ; *how dear they were to me, how sweet I pictured them, how much I longed to see them.*

“Ah,” he said, “you know, we shall visit them some day

I have no doubt of it, though it is too long a trip for our bridal tour ; I could willingly explore the whole vast continent of South America, but it would take up too much of one's life, and consume an ordinary fortune."

I said, "There would be a difficulty about the education of the children in such an unsettled country."

"Does not the mother intend to educate them?" he asked. "Surely, while they are so young, she could have nothing better to do."

I replied that she felt a difficulty, and he was occupied with other thoughts, and forgot all about those children. And I did not again revert to the topic, which, why I did not know, but certainly I dreaded.

I announced to Mrs. Milford that I was to be married on the 2nd of March. She was greatly delighted, but told me I gave her too short time to make her preparations. She directly commenced with business, as indeed was necessary; but I had always made up my mind that I would fix my marriage-day but a short time beforehand. The wedding was to take place at Findon. Whence else should Mr. Russell fetch his dowerless and homeless bride, if not from the roof where she had lived according to her plebeian profession, in the sight maybe of society; but where, with human kindness around her, she had been proud in her independence, and never felt that yoke which an educated gentlewoman only can conscientiously bear in a family like the Milfords'. I was as proud as Mr. Russell himself, except when alone with my love for him: I knew myself the veriest dust of the earth beneath his lordly tread; and knew it rejoicingly.

Mr. Milford was to perform the ceremony. I had made no purchases as yet, notwithstanding my affectionate little sister pondered in her foreign home about my pretty dresses. I had not considered my bridal dress, or indeed anything of what I was going to do, as if the thing would happen. It had always been far off—there had been something to wait for; and now the barrier was removed, and I looked straight upon the altar, and first realized the awful nature of marriage. For ever and for ever! rang out the voice of my soul, as once it rang in anguish—a joyful voice now; oh yes, joyful, but full of awe. *His wide life! his precious happiness! was I worthy? Should I be able to make a home where he would*

be content—where he could sit down and be at rest, and where what he found would suffice for him? Or, oh horror! would he see that his eyes had deceived him, and that when we were wholly united, I was not one to fill his soul? Would he be compelled to step out of that sacred realm to seek less delusive enchantments? and I, cold and proud, school my heart to bear—he scornful and cruel, neither seeing nor hearing; and so we should be as the two poles—yet evermore united. O God! spare me this bitterness that could not be endured! this fire that would surely consume! Rather let me never be his wife, than fail hereafter to mould his home. Afar off, I could bear to behold him, so he did not suffer; but to be taken into his heart, and know not why it beat, that could I not endure.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

They parted ne'er to meet again.

COLERIDGE.

MRS. MILFORD wished me to order from London the dresses I required, thinking it sufficient to send directions, as I did not make it the business of my life how I should dress myself; and I should soon be in the vicinity of fashion, and could then make my choice, for my lord had announced to me that we would leave London for Paris the day after our marriage, *en route* for that Spanish shore, of which I had so often spoken to him, which I desired to search, and where we trusted to find a grave of one of my dead. Was it not like him?—oh, he was noble! What other would have mingled a thought so sombre, though it lay deep at my heart, with the first weeks of his bridal? Yet did he, and I thanked and blessed him, but not with words. Therefore, subject to Mrs. Milford's advice, I decided upon having a brocaded white silk, untrimmed, to be married in, which was to be quite plain and high, with a sleeve to the wrist; and I should wear nothing over the dress excepting my veil. The veil was to be large and square, such as would *envelop the figure*, and that was to be fastened upon the *head with a wreath of the eternal orange-bloom*.

I wrote the orders and despatched them ;—I walked out with Caroline. Caroline was half wild with delight ; she was to be my only bridesmaid ; I would have no guests at my wedding-feast. But I was not at rest. I wondered if women always felt thus who were about to be brides. But then they did not love—as I loved ! There was nothing for which I could reproach myself, and yet I felt guilty, and ever and anon the scene shifted, and though I hated the suspicion and the doubt, I thought he was vanishing ! He ! my beloved ! oh what dark cloud was coming now, descending distantly, whose pall I felt while yet afar off. I could not smell the fragrant flowers, spring's sweetest buds ; I could not listen to the birds' songs waking from the winter.

I was obliged to say to Caroline that we would go back to the house. She feared I was ill—she was tender and gentle, with her soft hands and gliding step—young, fresh darling !

But even she would not do—I wanted to be alone. I lay down on my bed, but I could not rest ; I got up again, and searched in my dressing-case for that brooch. Polishing its glass like crystal, I looked at it in the gathering shades of the swift-coming spring evening ; I examined over and over again the beautiful hair—how I longed to lay my hands on the heads from whence those locks were cut ; the bright curl in the centre brought me back to what they had said of their children. Then I knew whence came this sorrow on my soul—it had to do with those children, I knew it. They in their innocence had created the darkness ; yet I loved them, ah ! how in that hour I loved them, the rest only proved. I bound their loveliness yet closer to my heart, for they were good also ; and I should behold them ! They would come, and they and I should be banded in a home, perhaps, where no other love would surround me. Would their tongues suffice to drown the music of another voice—gone far away ? Would their sweet kisses chase away those which lingered on brow and hand, and could never be replaced ? Ah, grave reality ! this was no dream ; I knew that it was life. I was a war-horse scenting battle on the breeze ; but never war-horse stepped along his way so quiveringly, so aguishly, as in those pangs prophetic I closed my eyes to suffer.

*Was this a mania, or outright madness ? As I lay there with my betrothal-ring upon my finger, were not his chariot*

wheels before my gate waiting to bear me forth? Two weeks—two little weeks—and I should be his wife. What could transpire in so short a space to sunder us? If aught should come, it would create my death—I never could survive the loss of him. I fell to prayer in my blind dread; then I felt more calm; but I did not go downstairs. Mrs. Milford came in to see me, kind woman! then she went down to dinner, and I lay with hushed breath listening for the signs of his coming—for the fall of the iron gate, for the tread upon the gravel, for the hand that entered unbidden. I had not to wait long—he was there—in the garden—in the house. I arose and put on a different dress;—then there was a knock upon the door—"Mr. Russell, ma'am."

"Yes, Eliza;" and having put all things in order, I went down to meet my fate. He saw that I looked ill, and immediately began to inquire what it was that ailed me?—what hurt me that he did not share? Could anything have distressed me, and he not know?—what would I suffer him to do for me?—what had I got to say to him? So he questioned, and I looked into his eyes to see terror and a judgment, but I could see nothing—nothing but a world of love. I laughed in my heart! he was there! he had not deserted me! nothing had happened to him! I could see him—he was still mine! but I would tell him my trouble, it should be once and for ever. And so I told him, hesitatingly, how I had felt that day—how the nightmare had seized hold of me—how I could not resist it—how it had seemed to me that we should never be married, but that something would arise to take him from me (were they not the words my young lover had spoken to me?) whether it was that my hesitation, so unusual with me, showed him that it was a grave matter we discussed—the coming of these children to find a home in my heart—or whether it was simply his conviction that he could not tolerate any sharers in my love, certain it is that he listened without a word or a smile; and not until I asked of him that he would join in the solemn trust, did I obtain any response. Then he said, decisively,

"I cannot do that."

"Cannot do that—why not, my beloved?"

"*Mary, the thing is unnatural. Can I be the father of children whose parents are nothing to me? Why should I*

take the responsibility of a most religious charge, who have shrunk hitherto from any household bond? Why have I lived to these years" (he was thirty-four years old) "with no wife on my bosom, but because I dreaded so sacred a trust. I was not assured that I could devote myself to the keeping of her peace. I have met women, Mary, who in their innocency have loved me; I never told you this before—I thought too lightly of myself in comparison with you—seeing you, the doubt was past, the die flung, and I feel secure of happiness. Why would you forge double bonds, Mary, and wish to lay double chains about me, and all for the sake of strange children whom you have never seen? It cannot be, Mary!"

I grafted his face upon my memory, so that it never could fade;—I felt him receding from me. I knew now we should part. I believe that I lost my senses, for when I saw distinctly again, I was lying on the couch upon which I was previously sitting, and he was pouring upon my ears floods of tenderness. It was a moment ere all was recalled; then I awoke to pain—to sharp, strong pain, such as cleaves body and soul asunder. He was there, yet he was vanishing—the place which had known him would know him no more. I felt those pretty children already in my arms; *he* would not share with them; therefore, as both these things were real, so true was it that we should part. The bonds of a lifetime were about me, and not even my betrothed could rend them in twain! Oh! what would happen to me?

[At this distance of time, I am compelled to lay aside my pen, and turn to my dear companion for comfort under the deep grief that is not yet subdued—not altogether subdued, although I am content. It is the recurrence to those scenes which so affects me; for there are days, I am thankful to say, when, except for the turquoise resting upon my hand, I might not remember that proud gentleman who was to have been my husband. But she knows my moods, this dear dark-eyed maiden; and she rises from her low seat, and comes to take my hand, and she leads me forth into air where I can breathe more freely, and we walk by the shore; and she tells me that the boat is due—the fishermen's *boat from the island*—and that she fears poor Juana, whose *eldest son was drowned*, will be uneasy if it dally, for Ped

is on board. And we return by the winding path by the rock; and she lifts the latch of a hut door, and enters. At sight of her, the old woman within puts aside her nets, and hastens to spread the *poncho* for the Señorita—the Señorita and the Señora—and she says, with tearful eyes, that the boat is late; and I know she expects my beautiful one will say some word to console her, which presently she does—“She thinks, if there be a storm, it will not work round till midnight, when Pedro will be safe at home.”

Thus is she a comforter! The poor rise up and call her blessed; and making many a gleesome heart, she is the light, life, and glory of mine—*my Dolores*.]

That was the last time I ever talked with Mr. Russell, or sat by his side. I beheld him once afterwards—only once—it was a memorable meeting; but it did not take place until some years after that which I am recording. When I had recovered, he expressed his sorrow at my illness, and said he was very sorry he had couched his feelings in such words as to distress me. He presently asked my pardon; my tongue clave to my mouth, for I knew that only at our parting could *he* ask pardon of *me*. And after that I have no remembrance for a time of what words were said, only his voice was calm and firm; it rang like the booming of a bell, and I knew it for the voice of his decision. And gradually there must have fallen upon him a horror of great darkness, since he found the woman he loved unyielding (oh, mighty mystery!) for I heard him say once—“Mary! I believe you are lost to me, as truly lost to me as if you were buried in Bletchley churchyard! I should madden to have only a share of your thoughts. I have been beforetime jealous of the very letters you hoard so scrupulously.” Then we were still again. “Mary,” at length, “I don’t say I shall not marry another woman than yourself, but I tell you I shall not marry for love. I shall never love any but you—you may remember that.”

When it was very late, he folded me in a long, long embrace; then he removed his arms from around me, and I *moved back* apart. He passed by, but he returned; and, *which he had seldom done before*, he kissed my lips. “I have a *dark path* before me, almost of despair!” Those were the *last words I heard him speak*.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

Relentless past, canst thou not hear a prayer?  
 Dost thou deride our immortality,  
 And calmly tell us we must ever bear  
 The hopeless agony of knowing thee?"

AND now you who are reading this history, and who think that it is a tale, lay down the book. You have read the early trials, the bliss, and the suffering; but if you do not feel that this is *life*, you are not worthy to read the rest, the struggle or the calm; for they, like the other, are true. Witness, O ministers, the weary vigils of the sleepless nights, the joyless days! Mock not, O reader! those glorious children did part me from the betrothed whom I adored, and with no other weapons but the weapons that were within the conscience that could not forswear a trust—the conscience that was doubly, trebly bound!

I did not go to bed that night—I was hour by hour looking out at the moon, crying aloud, "Why have I been created?"

I stretched out my arms towards the distant towers of his home; I longed after it, I could not resign it. I thought I would go to him, I would kneel before him, I would tell him I could not part with him, I could not take his decision; that I was thirsting after him, that I was dying, that—that—then I lay low upon the floor, crouching down in my desolation; and in that hour Edward Raymond, in part, was avenged. Ye that do evil with impunity, take note, the avenger followeth. It comes home to those who deceive—and dark and life-long is the curse of infidelity.

I wrote a letter in the early morning to Mr. Russell:—

"FINDON RECTORY, 18th Feb.

"Mary Cameron to Mr. Russell.

"I beg of you to tell me is your decision about my children final?"

To which I received for answer:—



"DEAR MARY,—I cannot permit myself to come to any other conclusion. I could not suffer those children to usurp any share in your heart. I am a tyrant, Mary. Revoke my doom. God bless you.

"Yours,

"WM. RUSSELL.

"P.S.—If unhappily you cannot yield, you will be so good as to return my letters."

"Mary Cameron to Mr. Russell.

"I will not part with the letters—I will never part with them—they are the only memorials of what has been."

"DEAR MARY,—I beg of you to return those letters. By all you consider sacred, by the love you profess for me, by the happiness I might have yielded you, I beseech you to return those letters.

"WM. RUSSELL."

"Mary Cameron to Mr. Russell.

"You might as well expect to move mountains as to induce me to give up those letters."

And it only remained for me to announce to the Milfords that my engagement was over, and that I must immediately quit Findon. Their consternation, their distress, was sufficiently expressed; the more so that I could with difficulty account to them for this sudden and awful change. I could not trespass upon those last solemn moments to transcribe them for their ears. And if I had done so, would they have comprehended?—could they have entered the secret chambers of a love eccentric and mysterious in all its cadences? As haply might they have appreciated the charm of our betrothal, as have entered into the manner of our parting. Our hearts were odd! they suited each other, at least for the time being. Other women would have tossed their pretty heads at the style and tone of his addresses; but mine was not a pretty head, and no prouder incense was ever laid at my shrine in days then unborn, than those weird commentaries upon the creatures which existed in my own brain at the moment they were emitted from his.

*But though I might veil from kind eyes the manner and the sign, I could not veil from them its dread effects; I could not rise and play a haughty part, as I had done once*

before. The strength which bore me from London to Southampton to watch the parting presence of the creatures whom I loved, was not in existence now. I was, as he had said, only a woman ; and, like a poor, weak, hopeless woman, I suffered. My desire was to get away,—to put vague distance between myself and Bletchley.

Hills and valleys ! would they be as green and as fair when other years came round ? Would other forms as proud and as bright glance over these woodlands ? Hope never for a moment spanned the gulf ; we might meet again, (oh, that we never might !) but ere then he would have chosen another.

His parting words were ever in my ears. In the hour when he suffered as well as I (for I saw his face in the moonlight), he had not declared with passionate adjuration, after the manner of men, that he should not wed another. He had simply said that he should not *love* another. And I was not of that pitiful mould whose anguish would be assuaged by the bitter transport, that another winning his cold hand could never touch his heart. Oh, I hoped some fair girl would come and fill up the void in his heart, with whom he could speak of me if he willed (he would always speak with respect), and she would erase the bitter fruits of a prejudice of mine which had once staggered his peace. My clothes were packed, there was nothing else to do, but another night to pass. I did not go down into the family,—I was not fit ; and I did not acknowledge their sympathy, though they must have offered it.

I knew nothing I should do after my arrival in London. As night came on I had a great gasping, which I thought could not be overcome. I thirsted once more to behold him ; I would not for the world that he should see me, but if I could catch but the glimpse of his figure !

To be taking myself he never would know where—to be denied one more last look ! I had taken *one*, that was not enough.

I did not walk up and down the familiar room, where for several years I had slept in peace, and which had witnessed my *exceeding happiness*. I knelt on a chair looking out *upon the woods*, and did not move till morning. I was stiff as *had been by my mother's grave*, when it was grey morning

and I knew that I should never again see the sun rise over Bletchley. I had stirred with the consciousness that returning day brought, and I had to catch the sill of the window, to save myself from falling. Then I walked to and fro, and my misery increased upon me. Perpetually and instinctively I committed him to God. It was of him that I thought most; it was for him that my soul wrestled with the calm majesty above me for pity and for peace. I will pass over their farewells; I did not weigh their value. I believe Mr. Milford approached me as I sat ready dressed, waiting for the carriage to come round, and that he took my hand and said in a sorrowful voice, "I am very sorry for you."

I believe that Mrs. Milford was uneasy and pained at the want of my confidence; but that feeling lent no harshness to the tone of the entreaty with which she begged I would write to them, and said she must see me again. And Caroline must have hung round my neck shedding torrents of innocent tears, but they were lost upon me.

When the moment came, I passed mechanically forth; my eyes clung to the last to that stern picture hanging upon the wall. I seated myself in the carriage, as another morning I had seated myself in my father's carriage, with the appurtenances and the accompaniments of the Camerons about me, to pass from Lynwood never to return, when I set out into the world. Again I passed from a homestead, faithful though not my right; and this time, as at that time, I felt it not. I saw their tearful eyes and the waving of their hands as I was driven from the Rectory door, and I was utterly forgetful of Findon, for in a very short space we should pass by Bletchley—I should roll by its very gates. How I prayed that in some deep grove I might see the shadow of a form which would not recognize me. How I strained my eyes, and stretched out my arms over the acres which he owned. But my last cry was not to be granted me,—he was nowhere to be seen; and soon the towers, and the lakes, and the trees were gone out of my vision for ever. And what I *felt*!

[I am compelled at this juncture to stop, for I cannot see *through* my glasses, and they are good ones too. I advise *everybody* who has weak sight to go to MacPherson's in *Cornhill*; that is, if they are not twelve thousand miles off, *as I am at this time*. The memories that come over me

ling that season, are such as even now I cannot describe. not that I envy their happiness, or wish to be myself at smiling scene twelve thousand miles away, where the wife sits upon his knee, and he hears the voice of hood. Thank God! there is again an heir born to that sh of the house of Russell, although they lost their first-, and their next two babes were daughters. I would change places with that lovely lady, not for all the world. ould not be sitting in this pretty room, with my favourite res upon the walls, and the dearer living ones beyond, had not won such tranquillity from the waters of lation.

Dolores Concepciona and my pretty Josephita are sitting by side; they have each a sketch on the table before , to which they are putting the finishing touches; for orrow will be mamma's birthday, and these are to hang r boudoir.

y Dolores looks up when she hears my pen cease; and feel cold, perhaps I look pale,—very unusual in this ste. Certain it is she lays aside her palette, and comes to my couch. "My beauty!" she says, "why do you , so much when it makes you grieve? Don't do so, it esses me. What a number of closely-written sheets, and neat! I have decided upon the manner in which my shall be bound; how long before we get it from London? ll desire those gentlemen, Elphinstone and Horne, to y, on my behalf; do you think they could possibly y? (*query?*)

[ shall have a pale green morocco binding, and since it e best of all the books you have written, I shall indulge fanciful device for my particular copy; I shall have rg some silver flowers the motto of our house—'*Ardiente uena causa*'—for a little elegant souvenir. Come, I ou smile. Ah! it is a very good motto. Now, never sad again; for do you know, my Prima, papa said he half a mind I should not read this last book of yours; ; appears he knows what is in it, and he says you made f-sacrifice, and he does not approve of self-sacrifices; not people are to be selfish and wrapped up in their own re, but he says you were a martyr, and he cannot have dolores, his eldest daughter (and here she drew herself

up), he cannot have her sacrifice herself. No, he wishes me to be like Josephita, our birdie, and have as noble a husband. Come and see baby. How ever his mother can sit there, though they are for our mamma, touching and tinting those flowers, when such a rosebud as that is near, I cannot imagine."

But I could not be carried from my desk, not even to look at Josephita's baby, and, moreover, I kept my Dolores a prisoner until I told her this, that although her dear papa knew me better than any other person in the world, yet he could not enter into a woman's feelings, and knew nothing of the meaning of "martyr;" and that, far from regarding my adoption of his daughters as a self-sacrifice, I had believed, and should ever believe, that they were not only the saving of my life, but the agents of a purer happiness than I had thought could ever be mine. Then she ran off to her sister's baby, and I resumed my pen.]

On actually arriving at my journey's end, I felt, strange to say, relieved. Already the blow belonged to the irremediable past. I was separated from him; he could not seek me, nor could I return to him. I no more breathed the air of Bletchley—Bletchley and its lord were gone!—and the world was all before me.

Now it so happened that I had not named to Cranston Barton any prospect of my marriage—I was averse to writing of it, and what need? I could ask him to Bletchley (time enough when I was there), and our correspondence was very irregular. There would sometimes be months between our letters; therefore, at this time he knew nothing of my movements. I had driven to the same private lodgings where I had last met dear Mrs. Barton, and, with the weight of life before me, I sat down to make a plan, for I was too old, and the blow was too deep and dire, to admit of insensibility. I had no stupor of fever as I had when Francisco left me, mercifully; for where would a nurse have sprung from now? Then I was young and gay, and the storm struck me down; now I was exhausted with the contrarieties of torture with which I had been wrung for three days and nights; but I was old; I appeared to myself fifty—I felt that I should not die; therefore I sat up to act.

*My circumstances were critical; I had not much money in my purse; for the dresses I had ordered remained to be*

paid for with the last amount of my salary,—the dresses which could not be countermanded, and which I must instantly order here, they must come to the lodgings of my widowhood, as costly in texture, as fair in hue, as they would have been worn at my bridal. I had not saved money from my expenses at Findon: they had pretty much met my receipts, though I was handsomely remunerated. In what way should I earn my bread?—Should I go again to the governess institution, to meet another Miss Ellmore? What else could be done by women I knew not, unless they were histrionics, or were capable of writing for sale. This latter I once more resolved—it had been constantly clinging about me, with a tenacity that had had its effect. I had written down my feelings as regularly as the weeks had successively passed—all but the last great woe; that could not be folded in poetry,—it was too solemn—too real. Supposing that I *could* write, I had no means of judging whether people who are authors felt and wrote as I did, and one cannot judge of oneself. The thoughts I wrote appeared worthy to me, but then they were my history. If other hands took up my pages, and strange eyes criticised, would their hearts be touched, and so their verdict be favourable?

My mood was one between life and death—a middle stage—that day. I had extraordinary thoughts—I had half a mind to take a bundle of poetry and walk right into ——'s house, and desire him, as a man and a gentleman, to tell me whether, by such works as these, a solitary woman could earn her bread. I supposed that the flunkies would deny me admission; but I was not a person to be denied. In spirit, I was putting them all aside, and bidding the gravest among the servitors conduct me to his master; and I saw that wonderful man glance up from parliamentary papers, epistles from his children, and classical documents whose writers should be immortal—the deep young students of Glasgow, with whom this man, who stirs the nations, has time to hold casual correspondence in his title of lord rector. But I did not proceed any farther in my appeal; I did not see whether he encouraged the hope that hung in the balances.

What should I do? Cranston Barton might write to me at Findon, if he did not hear I had left. I thought it right

to let him know I was in London, if nothing more. Proprieties did not occur to me when I visited my old friends. I took a cab to his rooms in Bloomsbury. Great was his surprise when he saw me ; he did not know me at first ;—it was some years since we had met. When he did know me, he warmed my heart, by his earnest kindness of manner and tone, not a whit altered for the years which had passed over him. He was afraid I was ill—I must have looked fearfully ill. It overcame me greatly to see him. I had still a faithful friend ; some were dead, and others were changed, but Lillie's brother was still my friend. I must speak to him ; I must take him into my confidence,—not wholly, but in part. If I did not share this load with some one, my strength would not suffice me. He was much affected at witnessing my evident trouble ;—he glanced into the street.

"Mary," he said, "I am not particularly engaged to-day, and if I were, this is like an angel's visit,—a lady in these lonely rooms. Come, let us walk out together ; we can find a walk where none will interrupt us, and it is hard if your old friend can find nothing with which to comfort you."

He ran out to get his hat ; it was upstairs, apparently. I saw him take two or three steps at a time up the narrow staircase,—there was an invigorating air about him ; in a moment he called to me,—

"Mary, I want you up here ; I have something to show you in my studio. My old woman may mistake you for a model—her eyes are weak—but never mind."

I got up and walked out into the grim little hall, and up the close stairs ; they were not grimmer or closer than such houses always are in London, but to me their effect was oppressive in the extreme. I had come from a region of light and air. But when I reached the painting-room, I was soothed by examining it. There were not many pictures, and none that I thought fine, either in subject or colouring ; but some were nice, and I felt sure had a promise. I said so, and he replied seriously,—

"I hope so, Mary ; but it has been a hard struggle. Would that I had never gone to Cambridge. My father, *sacred be his memory*——"

"*Mr. Barton is not dead, Cranston?*"

"Did you not know it? He died a month ago."

I now noticed he wore mourning.

"I never was told of it; how grieved I feel! And was his end peace?"

"His end was peace. And now, Mary, I am alone, like yourself, save for one consolation; I must speak of that to you one day. Young artists in London who have no one to take them by the hand, and no money to give entertainments, not even a dinner to a few men, have an up-hill game to play. One can't get into society without the means I have named; and who cares about third-rate pictures by a painter nobody knows? I am unlucky. I know what I want; but I can't get it. My education was at fault; nevertheless, I do something, and I hope for a better day. Last week I accidentally sold a picture for a larger sum of money than I expected; but that is the least part of the matter. Men are not easily satisfied, Mary, with whom to paint is a *passion*. How natural it is to be talking to you, like the old time again—how is Francisco?"

"He is well," I replied; and Cranston relapsed again into his former strain.

"When I was a young man, I accidentally heard Stowell deliver a lecture to a 'Young men's association,' and I have never forgotten some parts of it; he said that young men were apt to think, if they had not money or powerful connections, it was impossible for them to advance in the world. 'Now,' said he, 'there never was a graver mistake; if any young man has health and a good character, no matter what his name or rank, unless he fail to respect himself, he can make himself a place in life. There is a way and a means for every man to live; but 'whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.' That's the grand thing, and never think fortune indispensable. Great men are carving their own position every day of your lives,—sweet is the bread of independence; and don't be afraid of work, and of all things husband your time—your time is your money. Be content at first with small things,—the world was not made in a day.' So he went on; and, Mary, that lecture had a great effect upon me."

And had it not an effect upon me? He did not know it who *sung the seed on the waters, which bore fruit after many days.*



"See this picture, Mary," said Cranston ; "I have often wished to show it to you. How delighted I am you are here ! See the eyes, what think you of them ? And the brow,—is it not a mysterious brow ? so high and grand for a girl's, is it not ? I must show you the original ; she will love you ! She is very well acquainted with you."

Alas, alas ! he was trespassing ; those sweet words and few, I could not bear them. He was trampling among my agonies. Would these words of Cranston's pass away with the fondness that intoned them ? I said the girl was beautiful, and turned shivering away.

"Not beautiful, Mary dear," he followed me saying ; "but I have allowed you to stand too long. How very poorly you are ; how negligent of me, and you are so fatigued too. There, sit down in my arm-chair ; my landlady has threatened to cover it over and over again, but I don't use this low room much."

He was busy at a cupboard in the corner ; presently he brought out a black bottle and corkscrew. Then he went somewhere in the passage, and came back with two old-fashioned wine-glasses in his hand. I watched the process of the drawing of the cork, and he poured out some port wine, and brought one glass to me. Then we bowed to each other, and drank ; and no stately lady in her bower ever received a more perfect homage than was conveyed in his simple bend ; but I looked like a lady, no doubt ; I was handsomely dressed, and the dignity of real affliction is always palpable. Asking if I were too tired to walk, he ran upstairs again, to lock the door of his painting-room ; the key went into his pocket, "for," said he, "bachelors' territories are occasionally invaded, and such a thing has happened as Mrs. Lines (during my absence) walking accidentally into my studio, though I have lived in these rooms a long time, and in forgetfulness folding away most of my partly-painted draperies, in order to put the studio straight, as an act of charity."

We went out at the street-door ; he took my hand under his arm, and we walked silently some time. We turned corners and crossed streets ; but I left our course to him—I *knew nothing* of that neighbourhood. Shortly we reached *the Regent's Park* ; I had never been in it before ; it looked

green and grateful to our eyes. We sat down upon one of the numerous seats, although it was early spring. There were many people around ; but that was nothing. We might smile or weep, sitting in our separate existence, and they would take no account.

Then I told Cranston Barton, with a husky voice, that I had left Findon for ever ; that a fatal event had cut me off from it, of which I must never speak or hear ; that, therefore, I was now alone in London,—alone in all the world,—and I could not determine in what way I could live. As I passed out of my immediate trouble I grew firmer, and consulted with him about my acquirements, my habit of scribbling, my ignorance of my capabilities ; whether I had indeed the gift to write, and, if so, how I could bestow it. He was very much shocked at what I barely felt, that I was alone, and upon the world, with no money and no friends, and undecided as to my employment. But according as he learned my necessity of friendship, so I engaged the sincerity of his interest in me. And no good brother of a sister forlorn and desolate could take more anxious views or more earnestly discuss every thought which was advanced to him.

Thus acted this man, who had been taught in the school of adversity, and who found himself called upon with no adequate means to fulfil the most delicate and critical duty ; for had I not appealed to him by seeking him ? and did he not rejoice that I had done so ? In comparison as he saw that some stupor of sorrow blinded my eyes to my grave position, so determinedly would he help me in this hour of my need. Here were two persons, of opposite sexes, with very little money, no connections upon which to fall back, and no link to bind them together but the friendship the sister and the friend had bequeathed ; and the girl had no confidant but the young man. There was scope for human kindness !

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Do not look at life's long sorrow,  
See how small each moment's pain ;  
God will help thee for to-morrow,  
Every day begin again."

"THE first thing, Mary," he said, after we had talked for an hour, and were now walking about. We passed and re-passed by the Gloucester Gate ; how often I walked by it afterwards, and never without thinking of that day, and the truth of that efficient friendship, which had to be proved, not by words, but deeds.

"The first thing, Mary, is to find you an abode where you can feel at liberty. We will decide that you shall attempt this matter which is so forcibly impressed upon your mind. I did not know you had a fixed idea of publishing until now that you tell me so, but I feel to have great confidence in your power, though my opinion is, comparatively speaking, really not worth anything. I am not literary, how should I be ? I can do nothing but paint ; that is my passion, and it is warped by a fatal mistake ; you know I ought not to have gone to Cambridge."

"Cranston, do not lament. And for the rest you have sound common sense, and you are by no means unintellectual, and that is a character of itself."

"Well, Mary, I have letters of yours which I believe would not disgrace the Quarterly ; you know how clever you were always considered ; and see how the Milfords have appreciated you ; I am sure you will be able to achieve this thing ; it only requires strength of mind to begin, and that, I admit, is an awful *serviteur* to have to invoke in your circumstances ; sitting down quietly to gather up your powers, and put them down on paper, to compass a purpose you cannot grasp, while the days fleet by, pitilessly running away with your substance." For I had told him (*why should I hide it from him, I was incapable of shame in that*)

that in the course of a few days I should have only about twenty pounds in the world.

Yes! I, who so late was the affianced wife of Mr. Russell, for whom a great name, a grand home, and riches, so recently were waiting! who had tossed aside diamonds from my hands, which would have provided for my lifetime—(they were no heir-looms, previously worn by the women of his house, but had fallen to his possession in a very remarkable way. I well remember the story). I sat with Cranston Barton, the impoverished artist wealthy in the goodness of his heart, and told him calmly, without a tremor or a pang, that I was almost a beggar.

"Supposing, Mary, that you took some rooms—very quiet rooms somewhere, where you could entirely suit your convenience as to hours. And that you say to yourself, decisively, as you *can* say, 'Now then, I am not going to be dumb any longer, I am tired of being a cipher, and I intend to astonish the world.'

I burst into a laugh, a real, actual laugh. Oh, the good that laugh did me; I could not believe in my identity. Three days, three years, had been so fearful with me.

"Cranston!" I exclaimed, "leave off talking."

"Certainly," he replied, "when you take up the pen; for assuredly when you begin to write there will no longer be any excuse for ignorant persons' talking."

"But Cranston, if I should fail."

"But me no buts, fair lady!"

"I must, Cranston! oh, I am appalled. I imagine exhausting the trifle I possess, and not having advanced a step!"

"You will have advanced a step; you will have begun: you know what I told you Stowell said, 'the world was not made in a day.' How old are you, Mary?"

"Nearly five-and-twenty."

"Good! you are past the age of girlhood. You are a sensible, composed woman."

I groaned.

"Now, I believe it to be a moral impossibility that you should fail; but if you should fail, well, in three months' time, which twenty pounds will provide for, we can see about a situation."

"We!" the very sound was inspiring,—so hearty, so unmistakable.

"Well?" I said, waiting for him to propose everything. It was wonderful—sundered for years; yet I knew him, he knew me. I respected him, he was able and worthy to act for me, and perhaps one day (who knew?) I might be of use to him. Any way, he should do what he would. It was now mid-day—I was exhausted.

"Do you like the apartments you have, where you are?"

"I only arrived last night, you know. Yes, I like them, but they are too expensive, and too far from you."

I was clinging to my one dependence. I must be able to see him often. I should need refreshing, and a helping hand. I was not self-reliant and proud now. He did not smile impertinently, as a man of the world would have smiled.

"True," he said; "this neighbourhood too is good, and we are near Mr. ———; you went once with my mother to hear him preach. It does not do, Mary, to be toiling for the body all the week, and forget the soul on the Sunday."

"No!" I replied. What a testimony did my past Sabbaths bear of me, eaten up as they had been with idolatry of a creature!

"We will inquire as we pass along, and you shall see, if you like any place."

So we did; we knocked and rang at several different doors; but the aspect of the houses disgusted me. How should I exist in one of them? I felt as if I must choke. Write! and write truth, and such as would not rise up in judgment against me, beneath such roofs as these—in such an atmosphere! Yet, I repeat, they were very respectable, and the neighbourhood one of excellent repute. It was I who was incapable so soon to accommodate myself to the change in my condition. It was myself, not the houses, which were at fault.

Cranston grew a little anxious when I pronounced all alike intolerable, and I was by this time footsore and weary. We stood a moment at a crossing. I felt disposed to lie down upon the flags—what would it signify? Little angels *rose up before my eyes, from the bosom of unseen waters. No, the omnibuses, cabs, and horses must not trample me down for a prey.*

"Where are we going to?" said I. The question reminded him of my exhaustion.

"I'll tell you what it is," he said, "I shall have you ill. Now, where *are* we going?—that is the question—where shall you like to go? I will take you back to my rooms, and I will order some dinner for you. Will you like that, Mary?"

"No, no," I said, my desolation dawning upon me. "We will go into a shop, where we can get something to eat, and then I will return to Wimpole Street."

"Of course! I know of the most charming confectioner's shop; I took my little girl there once,—it is very seldom she escapes from her thralldom. It is close to this street."

So it was, with a window full of *wedding-cake*. I ate different things which he brought me.

"Mary," said he, "I have a happy thought; you will see it will answer."

On leaving the shop, he called a cab, ordering us to be driven to Camden Town—"This end, by the Park."

And we started, shaken in the rickety vehicle. Where were the prancing horses which brought for my approval the handsome new carriage, lately built for me, to the open door of the Rectory? The air was pure and fresh, blowing from the country, as we got out in Camden Town. Cranston examined the exterior of a nice little cottage with a garden, a small detached house; I looked as if that was more promising.

"Does it look as if it would assimilate with the voices of birds, and the flowers and sweet things you will have in your head, Mary?"

"Knock!" I said.

A young woman came to the door, with a baby in her arms.

"I see you have rooms to let," said Cranston.

"Yes, sir, very nice rooms, airy and comfortable; please to step in, sir."

We stepped in; she threw open a little parlour. Very small—a perfect miniature; but the furniture in it was evidently new; and the window was open into the garden in front, where there certainly was a rosebush. I felt as if I could live there. I sat down in a chair, Cranston

another; the young woman with the child stood in the doorway. One day, long afterwards, in the Royal Academy there was a great crowd round a picture by that eminent artist, one of whose pictures was that spring a bone of contention between the cabinets of Vienna and London; for the Austrian Emperor and the English Queen both wanted the original; and the painter was sufficiently proud, and sufficiently secure, to refuse to paint a copy. And the grandees of rank, and the patrons of art, discussed the lines of that forlorn face, which looked round from the puny easy-chair, with such a longing loving look, in the midst of its own desolation, upon the smiling mother and the cherub infant, on the other side. Nobody told the silent critics, the wondering men, or the breathless women, that they looked upon life.

"Well," said Cranston pleasantly, "will this do?"

"Yes," I said. He made all the arrangements.

The young woman blushed, and was confused, when she heard that I only was to occupy the rooms. And she said she was afraid, if I had much company, she could not wait to suit me. I understood her. She was a virtuous woman, the wife of an honest man, and a mother; and she, in her sunshine, saw that I was wretched, and she thought something was wrong.

I said quietly that I should have no visitors, "unless, indeed, this gentleman, who may bring his wife to see me."

There could surely be no sin in naming her who was to be, already as his wife. But I was sorry when the words were spoken; for had I not seen the rupture of solemn human engagements? Certainly I did not speak it as a falsehood, I really felt Helen was Cranston's wife, when I thus mentioned her. Cranston looked a little perplexed; but the good young woman was satisfied, and she offered to show me the bedroom. I, however, felt that I could move no farther, and wondered whether I might not at once remain in the house, where I had decided to live. Why should I be compelled to go elsewhere, when I should return immediately?

Cranston and I had a little conversation; it was settled that he should send for my luggage, which had not been unpacked and defray my account in Wimpole Street. M-

landlady was agreeable, and I was to consider myself established.

All this was done in order ; and I lay down that night, worn and weary it is true, but with a comparative tranquillity of mind, which, the preceding morning, I should have conceived to be impossible. I was content with the abode I had found—I was fairly launched in the new scheme of life—I had a fair field before me,—I should labour. True, I was alone ; but God was merciful, he would temper the storm ;—had he not done so before ?

Had not I, who reached London only yesterday, frightfully wretched, been placed in the course of a single day in circumstances of comparative comfort ? and all this had been brought about by one true friend, whom, at first sight, I, and certainly himself, thought wholly unable to assist me. Yet what had he done out of the common tide of nature ? Only a series of natural little circumstances, arising out of his sympathy, had been seized upon by him ; bringing about a sort of comfort to a bruised and hopeless heart, binding the wounds of a broken spirit, bringing strength to the weak, life to the dead. Verily he shall have his reward.

Thus then the embryo was in being—the beginning, that was to be the birth into the world of books. The next morning, ere I was up, to my surprise a parcel was brought to me. At the first intimation, I expected by some strange means it was the bridal dresses come, for I had desired Cranston to leave my address in Wimpole Street, on account of their being sent there. But no, this was a small parcel, a small brown-paper parcel, addressed in Cranston's hand. I opened it and found—oh, my friend ! that act will be an honour to your children of the third generation. He had gone home ; he was oppressed for me. For my sake he had battled all day ; but alone, he thought, “what a frightful position ! what can be done ?” But he was sure he had given me sound advice ; he was sure I had set about the right thing. What then could he do immediately that would spare me trouble ? what should I require ? Decidedly, I could not write without paper—I had none, as a matter of course, not having known what I was going to do. He went out and purchased the half of a ream of paper, an ink-bottle (I have it now, it stands under a glass case and is dusted ever



morning by Dolores; it is brown stone, with a spout, and has a metal ring in the cork—a very common ink-bottle to all the world, beautiful in my sight—I have named it in my will), a packet of quill pens, a dictionary, and some blotting-paper. Having made a parcel of these, and given orders for it to be delivered the first thing in the morning, he must have fallen asleep in his bed, with “the ministering angels at the four corners;” for if any man ever did a good deed for which in time or in eternity he shall be rewarded, that day witnessed it for Cranston Barton.

Did not that packet help me to rise?—was I hopeless as I dressed myself?—did I war with Providence? No, no—no, no—I durst not think, I durst not glance at what was beneath; but I breathed in outer air, for a kind hand had placed me in a streak of sunshine.

In his stately apartment did *he* vainly seek the forgetfulness of slumber? I durst not heed the phantom query—I durst not ask if he were suffering—no, no; if I did, I could not move.

Mrs. Lines—but I shall call her Anne; it was awkward to me to call her Mrs. Lines, I never did from the first—she brought my breakfast—tea, bread, and an egg direct from the country, she said.

There was a cheerful fire, and it was a bright day. The prospect was not so very dreary. Sensations rose in my throat unfavourable to breakfasting, but I made a better meal than I had done yesterday. Then I brought the little table near to the fire, and took out my paper, tried the nib of a pen, poured some ink into a stand, which was a chimney ornament, and I was going to begin—what?

## CHAPTER XXXV.

“Strive ; yet I do not promise  
The prize you dream of to-day  
Will not fade when you think to grasp it,  
And melt in your hand away ;  
But another and holier treasure,  
You would now perchance disdain,  
Will come when your toil is over,  
And pay you for all your pain.”

I HAD not the remotest idea. What was I going to tell anybody ? What did I know that would interest anybody ? Should I tell them what had happened to myself ? Ah, no ; though they would never meet me, or learn my personation, that did not signify. My secret chamber was not going to be rifled for them. No, no. There had long been secrets in it, tended well ;—but there was that in it now which should go down to the grave with me.

What then should I write ? Some imaginary story ! Some delineation of what might be fiction, but solemn truth. I thought I might ; but I shrunk from the beginning. The effort to do it calmly—to be picturing events and characters amid the gravity of life—it seemed a mockery.

Should I write history ? A happy thought. I knew nothing about the public taste, or the public requirements—nothing about critics or publishers. I liked the idea of history ;—there was a grandeur about history. I could easily fix upon a kingdom whose antecedents of institutions and rule were sufficiently worthy of my pen.

Some ancient characters should arise from the centuries past, at the sound of my foot-fall ; and the virtues or the accomplishments, the happiness or the misfortunes, of by-gone races, should speak again. It was settled. And now the scene and time. I looked round upon Europe—vast forest, the intricacies of which what eye shall discern, of *them who have hunted it from their birth-time—much less I ! The trees, and the guide-posts, and the well-worn road*

—they were familiar to me ; but how should I venture a step into the thicket ? Yet the legend could not be perfect, unless the whole were told. I trembled over the magnitude of my task—my dauntless effrontery. Where could I turn, if not in Europe, where an Englishwoman must be most at home ? Not to the vague indefinable fields, where tradition and fable go hand in hand, and the rush of succeeding generations has obliterated the landmarks where the crescent gleamed in the eras that are gone by. And the land of Ethiopia,—so dark a pall hangs over her, no infant hand can unmask her, exposing what she has once been, when it shows what she may be hereafter.

And the wigwams away there in the far west, the narrow circlet remaining, where the Indian girl still speeds over the cataract, on the steps of the hunters of her tribe, where nature is majesty still, shall we drag its romance to the light of kingdoms, while the good spirit rules them as yet, whose hunting-grounds are not history ?—Canada ? Mexico ?

But there is a country !—Ah ! beneath the bananas the women sit who tell their children what it is to be free ! Those rivers—those forests—that tropic bloom—the shadow of the Sierra—the mountain-pass—I see them ! They are my inspiration. Fool ! not to have thought of it before ! What else could I desire ? Of all dominions in the earth, what other could furnish me with such power ?—the heart beating within me. For I would sift from the mighty continent, the one country of Francisco—that fair land, rich in its merchandise, its advances in this my day ; and what had it not been in the veiled days of the past ! My heart swelled at the thought ; I should be transcribing what it would please him to see. Consolation ! I had found it, near upon the place of my love, untouched it—what should touch it ! Ambition was rising ! I should live ! I should taste of fame—I was assured of it, by the throbbing of my pulses, by the burning heat which came over me, of impatience, of longing.

To begin ! I would choose far back in the primitive time, when Peru was a heaven-descended legend. The Incas should sit at my table, with the *coraques* upon their brows ; and the priest of the fane and the maiden of the temple should give each other place. I would tell of the

life, the battles, the death, and the tombs where their people laid them ; and the silent Huacas should bare their bosoms for my hand to rifle the gold and the gems. And through it all some story might be woven, how a warrior loved a virgin in the City of the Sun, so should many readers be satisfied. And the opening line ?—wisdom ! brave heart. I used to repeat to Lillie in bed :—

“Royal in splendour went down the day  
On the plains where an Indian city lay.”

That was the thought I wanted ; but that was the offspring of some spirit of yore. I could not steal. This then I wrote :—

“In olden time a glittering city lay  
Beneath the moonbeam. Where it fell,  
The eye grew drunk with Beauty.”

For my work was to be blank verse. I had not heard that blank verse was wearisome to the public taste, and that nobody would have advised even Tennyson himself to have published a long blank verse poem, unless he had first established a reputation. Having begun, I went on, and my employment carried captive my thoughts necessarily ;—vast blessing ! I was weary when the night-time came, and ready to take my rest. And this one was a sample of many of my future days. I wrote a singular letter to Mrs. Milford, in which I afterwards found I omitted my address, though I begged of her to let me hear from her.

In the course of a few days I received from Francisco's agents (to whom I had prudently sent my address immediately on my arrival, as, through their house, I received my cousin's letters) a packet of letters from afar. I prepared to devour them—it was a sweet drop of balm. They came to console me in the new lone life before me. So they did ; but the first lines I read made me start from my seat. *What* did he say ? “Our dear children have sailed for Europe.—An English gentleman and his wife came down to Lima, with their children, to embark by last steamer for England. Thankful for such an unexceptionable escort, Maria was prevailed upon to avail herself of it.” “Revolutionary movements more threatening every day.” “There are moments when one sighs for a respite.” “Mr. and Mrs.

Murphy remaining fifteen days at Truxillo on their allows that time to announce the children's coming." terribly troubled." "Trust in you." I glanced manner over the pages. Inclosed was the copy of to the men of business, who from time to time furnish whatever sums were required for their ed and my brother's letter to me concluded with these "I do not ask *you* to love them." I then came postscript—a mist swam before my eyes—he des remembrances—to whom, think you?—my husband marriage was concluded by this time, he supposed." between myself and authorship—that was all the I should ever see.

And there was not a doubt of my reception of the children, the question was never asked. How should calculating questions, the people of that clime? The doors thrown wide to stranger or citizen, little they to ask hospitality of one of their own blood. I re-letter; they at least knew me, and what I was worth trusted in me; and they never should be disappointed! What was the date of this letter? In one day they would arrive,—these two young children, three and four years old. And they were coming to me, would be mine; no one would be able to take them from me. But what should I do with them? Where should I put them? These were curious questions. They were provided from one point of view, for of course I should expend their property for them. But what could I do with the babes, reared in luxury by a mother's hand,—I who was my money, and who had but a nutshell to receive them? However I endeavoured to write on, despite my found joy and anxiety; and on the Sunday next I had been established a fortnight, Cranston visited and brought his *wife*. I held out my hand and welcome, and our introduction was over; we knew each other well, even as I once brought together two who were strangers. We had all so much to tell and to hear, that we passed a pleasant time. What other circumstances but these could have associated pleasure with me during this period? I exhibited my work to them, and I told them about my children—I was a mother already.

Cranston was aghast ; he always was in my affairs ; but he would presently come round, more especially after this time, when he found I was really a singular woman, and could do what others dare not do. But on this occasion my friend had just cause for alarm. It must have looked like madness to attempt to compass this burden heaped upon my own. And my own false security is nothing short of madness in the retrospect now. How I could breathe I know not, or how I dared even to eat. But I was calm ; my great grief was buried ; nothing could move it : but for the rest, I had hope to win my bread.

I was fond of Helen when she went away that evening ; I quite agreed with Cranston that she was not beautiful, and that she looked religious. She had a sweet face and a bright smile ; rather delicate in appearance, with a full figure—artists do not admire the angular. She did not speak much ; what she said attracted the attention, and, I fancied, would fall into the heart. We kissed each other at parting, and she was to come to see me when she could ; but she lived a long way off—in Westminster, and could very seldom obtain permission to leave her pupils. She was not very comfortable, but she had a pretty good salary, which was an inducement for her to remain.

"I will bring her," said Cranston, "never fear," as they went down the little garden.

I saw her take his arm, and they walked on, peaceful, happy in the hopes of which I had been shorn. And yet they had trouble. They had been engaged some time, and there was slight prospect of their being married for some years to come ; and Helen had to think of him, lonely and comfortless in his apartments ; and Cranston had to think of her, neglected and tried in her situation of governess ; and neither knew for how long it would be. Yet they did not rebel ;—they made the best of their circumstances.

My book grew and grew ;—I had a pile of covered sheets now.

And what about the children ? I communicated with the agents by whom I should be advised of the arrival of the vessel, and worked on ceaselessly, thinking as little as I could *during the spare moments*—while I ate and drank—of the *desperate uncertainty* of my own prospects, and the awful

responsibility which I was assuming, to make that uncertain graver.

I soon received the official document, which announce in business terms, that the ship *Senator*, Captain Wells, had arrived in Liverpool, having on board the daughters of el Señor Don Francisco de la Vega, waiting my directions.

One thing was clear ; I must go and fetch them, and that at once—not an hour must be lost. I dressed myself, and walked to the terminus, to take the rail. I set out alone walking along the streets, *en route* for the future daughter of my heart, whose places were secured in it before they were born. I had undergone a pang, when I went to my desk, to the little ebony box, where I always stored my money. It gave me a shock to spend any of it ; but it was necessary. I was whirled along in the train, and I fell back with fearful anguish upon Bletchley. Oh, where was he ? Why was I alone ? Why was I thus forsaken upon this strand of my life, while he, who had loved me, was nowhere to be seen ? I must have passed through a great deal of that journey ; for I was composed when I left London, and when I reached Liverpool, I looked wild. I put a barrier upon myself ; I refreshed myself in the waiting-room ; removed my bonnet to smooth my hair, and found myself presently presentable to strangers. Then I took a carriage down to the pier, Was it fifteen years since my father had brought me the foreign cousin, whose own daughters I sought to-day ?

I anxiously inquired for the *Senator*. She was lying some short distance away—I was soon on board of her. There were a number of children on the deck. Few of the passengers had disembarked ; my tidings had been telegraphic. I intently looked at all those children :—there were none of them mine. I inquired for Mrs. Murphy, whose care my darlings were. “ She was below ; the young ladies were her daughters.”

I crept down the steep steps, and found myself in the saloon. A lady, with an infant in her arms, sat on a couch with a little girl playing with some strips of coloured paper on the floor at her feet. A taller child, with large soft eyes that fixed themselves on me the moment I entered, was standing by her side, holding the baby's hand. She was

Francisco's child! Grief and care for a moment were forgotten, in the exquisite bliss of that meeting. There were his eyes—his brow—his very hair;—and her skin was bright with the tint of his clime; and she was altogether his image. I held out my arms, and the lady, who had risen, spoke a few words to Dolores, and then she bounded forward, and threw herself upon my neck, and we shed passionate tears over each other. It was some minutes before I could turn from this child, surpassing all my dreams, to the wondering little creature farther off. When I did so, I saw that she was prettier than Dolores, with a more ordinary face. They were thoroughly distinct from each other, and so they have remained; yet both were, and still are, equally good and dear. It was some time ere, with my broken Spanish, I could coax the half-frightened Josephita to approach me. And I had also to address their protectress. I introduced myself briefly, for which there was little need, since the daughter of my brother had claimed me by the strong blood of kindred. Mrs. Murphy gave me some little anecdotes of the voyage, and news of the good health of the parents of my babes. She had not long known Francisco—her husband was an old friend of his; but she spoke very flatteringly both of my cousin and his wife.

I regretted to leave this kind woman, who had shown the children so much attention. Mrs. Murphy told me that Don Francisco was about to send a nurse with his children, which she had overruled, on the well-known score of difficulty in their future disposition. Therefore I owed her very much, for she had acted towards these as to her own children. She showed me a diamond bracelet, a present from Francisco, as the ship was just under-weight. He intended it doubtless as an acknowledgment of her friendly offices—and she assured me “she should value it as long as she lived, as the gift of the friend of her husband, of whom she never heard mention except in honourable terms.”

Little thought that pleasant lady how thankful I was to her. An ayah! what should I have done with an ayah? To have maintained, or sent back to her country to tell that Don Francisco had no relative in England, but a woman, who lived in a cottage which was not her own.

*Mrs. Murphy took leave of my darlings with manifest*



regret. She said she should ever remember my reception of her charges, when nature had thus exhibited her voice, and we looked upon each other, to love. I was anxious to return to the metropolis that night. It was then five, and looked cold and late ; but the children were well wrapped. My return journey was widely different from what the down had been ; for, as I listened to their chirruping voices, saw their pretty ways, and felt their entire dependence upon me, it was very sweet to have them. Yes ! I felt joy. It was a pure joy, now subdued by the wreck beneath it.

But soon the little tongues grow weary, the lamp ceases to please, the heads begin to droop, pretty little creatures ;—their bedtime had come, and we had a hundred miles and more to travel. I took one in my arms ; the other nestled beside me. I spread their large ponchos over them, and they fell fast asleep. What prayers I breathed over their sleep !—prayers that I might be worthy of their charge ; that they might be preserved blameless ; that I might live, and that they might live, for me to give them back to their parents in after-years. I could not describe the feeling I had towards them, beautiful innocents ! Not a creature of their blood in all the land, save she whose arms were around them. And what was she ? Oh, I prayed to earn bread now. Bread ! I asked ;—not plenty, not riches, only the bare necessities of life ;—that I might not perish and leave them.

We arrived in London at last. They did not awake when I gave one to the careful arms of the guard of the train, a tall Scotchman, and carried the other myself to the cab. Then the chest was put upon the top—the very same sort of chest as that which I had seen Francisco unpack in Lynwood, fifteen years since ; only this was larger. It was made of sandal-wood, delicious to the smell. We drew up at my cottage door. Anne and her husband came out ;—he was a market-gardener, who had managed to take this pretty house, for his wife to let. They helped me in tenderly with my babies. I stood over them with a bursting heart, and thanked God that they were there ; and as *I believed that sleep was a better thing for them just then than supper*, we carried them upstairs, and, partly undressing them, I laid them on each side of my bed. There

remained space for me. I was not hungry;—I preferred also rest; and they turned towards me as they slept, and round their soft arms about my neck, and I fell into a sweet dream, in which I was walking with angels. I had not had such a dream for weeks; so their coming, which began auspiciously, was continuing the same. I awoke before them the following morning, and very fondly I admired them; their faces looked like velvet, so wonderfully soft, and their hair was as black as ebony.

But I was their only nurse, so I must hasten; I was just dressed when Dolores opening her eyes, exclaimed, "*Donde stoy!*" Soon the little birdie at her side awoke up, and they sat together examining the room, watching me, laughing and chattering in a manner that enchanted me. I had seen very little among young children, and their ways were new to me. However, I don't think other little children had the ways of these. I attired them in their extraordinary costume, the worked petticoats, and red dresses fastening round the throat, with breast plaits, as if they had been made for a matron, and the coloured boots; and I took a hand in each of mine, and we went down the stairs. Those who denied them the palm of beauty, must certainly have called them picturesque children. Anne was ready for us; she wiped a tear from her eye; as she said, "*La! what nice young ladies.*" I dare say she wondered what I should do with them; but she, as well as I, found it an easier matter when it came to the point, than when it was viewed from a distance.

We did justice to breakfast. The little mouths were quite ready after yesterday's fast, and the change from ship diet ratified them. They appeared infinitely amused at my miniature domain, and delighted also; for children generally associate littleness with anything they admire. And on being introduced to the baby, they were charmed. Unconscious baby! many an hour it afforded my darlings a pastime, while I plied a ceaseless pen, now feverish with anxiety, and the only daughters of Don Francisco de la Vega played with the infant of the market-gardener, while the diamonds sparkled upon their mother's brow, and their father's name was to live for ages!

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

“Wait ; yet I do not tell you  
The hour you long for now,  
Will not come with its radiance vanish’d,  
And a shadow upon its brow ;  
Yet far through the misty future,  
With a crown of starry light,  
An hour of joy you trust not  
Is winging her silent flight.”

A MONTH of this had slipped by ;—I delighted in them and they in me ; and I worked hard while they slept now, and my work prospered, although the days stayed not.

I wondered I did not hear from Mrs. Milford,—I felt untold longing to do so ; to see something that had come from a house *he* had entered ; to see writing of a hand which had touched *his*. But no letter came, then or ever ; so small errors bring about great evils. Mrs. Milford supposed I could not unintentionally omit so important a particular as my address, and my begging to hear from her, when she could not tell where to write, only made the matter worse ; added to which, I had told her that I was leaving the boarding-house in Wimpole Street. The matter was naturally extraordinary to her. Long afterwards, I felt how she would have recalled all the stages of our acquaintance—my mysterious silence, my dearth of connections, down to the last incomprehensible step ; and what judgment must she have arrived at ? As certain as it is that I never heard from her, so certain is it that I addressed her no more. I felt deeply grieved—to be forsaken so immediately ; and I could not bear to *beg* tidings from his vicinity, though I would have walked every acre of the distance to have simply heard that he was seen as usual ; that—that—I knew not what. Oh, that I could hear his *name* ! but it was *not to be*.

*Dolores* arranged my papers with womanly gravity ; she was never wild or careless, that child ; she was such a child

as her father had been, except in his exuberant spirits;—she inherited the beautiful calmness of her mother.

Josephita, on the contrary, little bird ! was always on the wing, singing, laughing, chirruping, all the day long. Her infantine lips trilled forth the sweetest melodies ; they gave me many a burden of song, which afterwards rang out to the world.

My bird—and my lamb—no one had occasion to ask which was which.

Cranston and Helen came and looked at my nurslings, and I wrote a long letter to the distant mother, and my book was nearly done, and my purse was diminishing gradually, but surely, and the summer was drawing on—the summer which was in unison with their tropical constitution, the summer they so evidently enjoyed ; and in the midst of all these events, which were flocking upon my new existence, Anne's baby ran alone. Then there was rejoicing among all the members of the household. I ran, pen in hand, to see the sight, and Josephita clapped her hands, and Dolores, who had coaxed this step, smiled gleefully, and the sweet mother of the first-born baby wept—delicious tears.

Could I be miserable among them all ? Was the mark of Cain on me, that I should refuse to be comforted ? No, I was comforted with their pleasure, and I had an exceeding hope—I trusted in my labour ; but I lamented also with an awful lament, the more solemn because it did not darken all this light and gladness.

On the 1st of June I wrote the last sentence of my poem ; the last sentence, I mean of the copy which was intended to go to press. But I ought to say, from time to time, Cranston had carried away my manuscripts and copied them in his clear small hand ; and now that all was finished, there was as much writing of his as of mine ; but that did not signify.

Then we held a cabinet council as to what was to be done next. Helen had a half-holiday—it was Monday, an economical day, and we decided upon treating my cherubs to a sight of the Zoological Gardens.

Anne looked up the house, and carried her baby ; and *when we got there, Josephita ran off with those two to see (and hear) the parakeets of her own country. Dolores held*

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fast my hand, and listened to our talking, which, whether it were grave or gay, was all that she could opine about it; but they were picking up English words, Dolores rapidly, and we were in no hurry to teach them another language than that which was ever sweet to me.

We began upon business. A great step was taken—the poem was produced. “It would be very easy to part with it,” Helen said.

I thought so, though I did not say so.

“I know several men who are connected with the press,” said Cranston, “but I question whether they are just the right men for this sort of thing. I would speak about it to any of them, if you like, Mary; I am sure of candid advice if nothing more!”

I thanked him. I had a great mind to set about the business myself; I did not see that there would be any impropriety in my taking my manuscript to any of the principal publishers, and calling upon several consecutively until I achieved my object. Literary people may smile; but I am assured there are many well-informed persons who have as slight idea as I had of the magnitude of publishing a book.

Cranston Barton thought this preposterous. “To think of you, Mary, being brought to take such steps; who could have prognosticated, a few years ago, such a change of fortune for you?”

“Cranston! what do you mean, sir, by adopting that tone when we are within sight of the goal? Fortune, indeed! Ah! who would have prognosticated that I should have fulfilled my desire, and found myself a writer? I see nothing derogatory in a person who can put her thoughts together (indifferent though they be, they must have some truth in them, Cranston), taking upon herself to speak to respectable strangers as to the method of publishing them.”

“Well, dear Mary, you know best,” was his reply.

Before we parted, it was decided that I should set out to the City in the morning, bearing with me my precious roll. *But before we left the gardens, we accompanied Dolores on a survey; for she would not quit my side to examine the birds, beasts, or fishes in that children's inexhaustible treasury; and their little feet were weary, and their tongues*

faint on our way home, although "they were precocious children, three years older than their aged English children," which was what Anne and I had long pronounced about them.

I felt by no means intimidated when, on opening my eyes the next morning, I recollected that this was the day on which I was to dispose of my poem. This was the day I should have the promise, at least, of bank-notes to put in my little box to keep company with the remaining sovereigns. I dressed myself with more care than usual; we had a merry breakfast, and I came back over and over again to embrace my little beauties, who knew no more what I was about, or what depended upon it to themselves, than did the babe who cooed from the kitchen. They had given me a sweet name—one which I never afterwards lost—(it is not an hour since Constantino, my Francisco's only son, was torturing his sister to give him a right to use it, when she well knows that, if she did, it would be scoffingly rejected—I am Aunt Mary with him)—it was the Spanish "Prima," which signifies cousin. They had instinctively thus addressed me, and I was charmed with the name—they could not have chosen one more to my taste. I walked along till I got an omnibus, by which I rode to my first destination. I alighted, and passed into the well-fitted shop; I mentioned the name of the principal; I was told he was engaged. That was a pity; however, his partner must suffice. Mr. Betley also was engaged.

Glancing at my roll,—“Could I name my business?”

“No, I could not.” The individual looked perplexed.

“Might he ask—was it private business?”

“Yes.” He bowed, walked off—came back to the attack.

“If my business related to a manuscript, Mr. Betley would not see me; Mr. Hollis was the manager of that department.”

“Good! where is Mr. Hollis?”

“Step this way, if you please, madam.”

I was shown into a small office, where there were two chairs and a table, at which sat a portly man. He rose on my entrance, politely requested me to take a seat, which I did; reseated himself, and fixed his eyes upon my roll, which *was becoming the roll*. I said, coolly, “I have a manuscript *which I wish you to look over*; I am desirous to dispose of it.”

He bowed, and took the offered packet. As he was cutting the string which bound it, I said, "It is an historical poem in blank verse." He ceased unfolding it, as he exclaimed—

"Two of the gravest objections, madam, to your ever being able to dispose of your MS. I do not suppose you will meet with a publisher in London who will take upon himself to transact such a business; the public taste is quite palled at the sound of history in these days of mediocre historical novelists; and history in poetry, worse than all. I am sorry to give you so unfavourable an opinion, madam."

He was actually folding it up again without having glanced at the title-page—this that I had sat up a whole night finishing, dedication (!) and all. You may be sure to whom it was dedicated; and with their charmed names upon it, it could not possibly fail to be successful; this had been my verdict,—the judgment of genius over her new-born child, genius that dreamed not of the dust and the solder clinging on the steps of the gold.

"You think it is useless for you to examine it?" I said, with less confidence than hitherto.

"Perfectly, madam," he replied, most respectfully.

"Can you, then, recommend me to a publisher whose style it would be likely to suit?"

"I wish I could, madam. I regret to repeat that I do not know a single house who would undertake to purchase. We, or any other house, are, of course, most happy to bring out any work at private risk."

"What do you mean?" I said.

"At the expense of the author, madam."

"What sum would be required?"

Looking at the MS., "I should say, by appearance, £100 to £150—not more."

Perhaps I was a little clouded, for as I was departing, he said, "Prose works are the only style that goes down with the public at this particular time; prose stories, pictures of real life—the simpler the *dramatis personæ* the better—and written racy, with as much originality as may be."

They were a few plain instructions, costing him who uttered them only a breath, to me invaluable. I began to see the fire into which I had dashed; I began to see the

precipice upon which I stood also. I thanked the grey-haired Mr. Hollis with sincerity. He, too, was a good man in his place; he was able to speak a valuable word, and he spoke it; but I walked out of the shop with a heavy heart. My next attempt in Paternoster Row was equally fruitless. I did not meet with so much respect either as from Mr. Hollis. A lady alone, with an M.S. to dispose of, were certain symptoms. Neither did they look at my suspicious roll. It is needless farther to particularize the trials of that day; suffice it, that I saw seven publishers ere I would relinquish my hope; and only one of them read the title-page. He told me that "the only way in which unknown authoresses could establish a reputation, was by presenting something to a periodical, which, if accepted, more might be attempted; and should a continuous engagement happily follow—if the writing caused this signature to be appreciated—a work upon private account might follow."

So then I had gathered information with my terrible experience, as with a head throbbing with pain, and a fiery pang at my heart, wan, spent, hungry, alone, I threaded my way home. I dare not ride now—*sixpence*—I might soon not possess sixpence. I thought of Miss Ellmore's twenty-five shillings, and wished I had that sum.

I must have looked frightfully wild when I reached home, for Anne was quite scared; and as for my darlings, they removed my bonnet, they changed my shoes, they stroked my hot face with their velvety hands, they smoothed my hair, they hovered about me like two ministering angels, as they were. I could only lay them upon my heart, crying for mercy that we might not part. They were provided for. I could place them in schools or elsewhere for money, and in that case I would beg my bread, to stay near them; but it was too dreadful to have to give them up, when I had once tasted what it was to live with them, to be the centre of all their winning ways, their affection, their trust. To *love* them, and to be loved by them in return. I was after my old sin of making idols; and I was blind and could not see it.

Once more I went not to bed; I sat in ashes, not now for human passion, but stricken with the struggle with want, and *this love of the children*. I asked that we might not



part ; anything, anything, so that we might not part. But what was anything ? where could we find a scantier abode, to be one in which I could place his children ? where indeed for myself ? The long-forsaken turns not at the first supplication—I found not the pity for which I cried. Awful was the dawn of that morning's light. What could I do ? I wrote off to Cranston Barton, my last straw—scarce valid as a straw to a drowning man,—willing of heart, impotent of hand. I peremptorily demanded him. He came ; and we passed a season of bitterness. I hid nothing from him. What was mortification ? where was false pride ? since we must part ! my babies and I ! He could see no rescue—none. Then, as he was overwhelmed, I rose again. Had he not been *abandonné*, I should no doubt have yielded lower and lower ; as it was, I breathed out of his despair. “ Cannot I live two months and strive ?—what cannot be done ? Did not the man speak to me of periodicals ; why not try them ? If I *can* write—and I *know* I can, Cranston, I *know* I can,—surely I may dispose of small things ; and so little should suffice ;—ah, yes, the barest wages. For the babies, you see, need not want. It is only one miserable body that must be held together, to preserve the heart for those two children.”

Cranston only shook his head at the beginning of my words ; at the close he groaned. But he was not long cast down so hopelessly. We consulted long and earnestly ; we prayed that this terrible cup might pass from my lips ;—that I might not be condemned to place Francisco's daughters in the strange hands of hirelings.

“ For two months be it then, Mary. You have not sufficient money for that time, but I happily have ; it is very little to offer you, but it will answer the end, and it is nothing to us.”

“ *Us !* ” That told the tale ; but I knew it before. They were saving against their marriage,—each pound might hasten it. And here was *I* about to take from their substance. I saw how frightful it was—it was impossible for me to see clearer ; but—I was a tigress about to be defrauded of my young ! I stretched out my hand greedily for the thirty pounds he held towards me. I felt, when I held it in my hand, as if I was saved. My spirits rose madly—I should

ruggle through ; with such aid, and such necessity, I should achieve my purpose. So they feel who cast the first net ; the intoxicating prospect allures them, and deeper, deeper becomes their infatuation, until all is lost. How I clung to my children in my arms when he was gone !—how I wrestled with them, running hither and thither—I was in a daze. Anne was delighted ; she took her cue from me.

How I watched them in their sleep ! how my softened feelings vented itself over their heads ! how I committed them to a higher care, none know but myself ; and rising with the daylight, I sat down to my task, so much more difficult than before, since it was not the outburst of a fresh enthusiasm, which barely to itself had dreamed of a damp ; it was an awful necessity, on which depended more than my life.

Our visions are free, they will not be summoned peremptorily and emergently. The vaster the need, sometimes the colder ebbs the muse. I found it so—I could fix upon nothing to suit a periodical—I spent a very anxious day. I knew the bearing of many periodicals, their style, &c., but it was a difficult thing to establish myself to produce just what was wanted.

At last some papers had grown under my hand during that week ; and as I fancied a personal application was not in this case becoming, I addressed my small MSS. to several editors, and trusted my labour to the post. I carefully gave my address to each, and awaited the reply. Until I heard of no success, I felt as if I could not again touch my pen. And the pressure of circumstances gives us over to madness. For hours together I actually hardly beheld the sword suspended over my head. Only when I opened my eyes in the morning, there was the aching awful sensation at my heart, and the start into biting fear and dread.

I went with my babies into the beautiful park, those few days ; I took them in different directions—I told them stories as we sat under trees. I drew pencil pictures which delighted their eyes ; and we were dearer to each other as the sun went down. But this could not last—a week went by—no replies came ; again I was reduced to despair. Might they not have answered, if only to complain that my subjects were so or so, or my style so or so ? It would have given me an experience to seize. But they none of them

replied. Of course not—how could the business of office go on, if every foolish scribbler of manuscripts was to give time and attention? That among the mass which is worth being secured, and the rest go in silent companionship to some obscure pyre. Such, doubtless, was the fate of my productions, delivered in so heterogeneous a manner,—the least thing in the last place. It was a natural failure, but not the less grievous in its effects.

It was Cranston Barton who put into words at last the course there was for me to follow. I must, and that immediately, find a place for my children; I could not possibly keep them with me, since I could not remain in these apartments more expensive than my slender means could meet. When I had heard him say it, I felt distinctly that it was to be done. I did not attempt to question it any more. The very day I walked forth to take account of such houses as had written on their door-plate "Establishment for young ladies;" for I felt I ought rather to leave my darlings with persons who were educated, than with nurses in low life. It was a dreadful day. Former experiences had not touched upon this trouble, in its peculiar poignancy; for the well-being, the comfort of those unconscious little ones was now at stake.

I did nothing, happily, but wander and examine. When I got back, quite forgetful of all discrepancies between my words and my feelings, I suffered some expressions of trouble to escape me before Anne. I shall never forget her consternation; the manner in which she looked from one to the other of us, clasping her own babe to her breast. What did she mean, for she looked scared? was she going to turn us all out of her house was she going to hurl at me that I had come there on false pretensions? I had not done so. No words, if my appearance had done, indicated that I was of superior rank. But Anne was not going to behave so. No! she was a good angel in a humble woman's form. She took up the corner of her apron after a few minutes, and wiped her eyes. She was from Hertfordshire, a countrywoman bred at home, no Londoner; she did not say a word; but her silence was more eloquent than words. All she could have gathered from myself was, that from some unexplained cause I must part with the children.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Pray, though the gift you ask for  
May never comfort your fears,  
May never repay your pleading,  
Yet pray, and with hopeful tears.  
An answer, not that you long for,  
But diviner, will come one day ;  
Your eyes are too dim to see it ;  
Yet strive, and wait, and pray."

At night, when I was sitting alone, she came in. "Ma'am," she said, "something has happened to oblige you to part with the little ladies for a while?" I bowed my head.

"If you would excuse the liberty, as you are a stranger, ma'am, if you wanted to know of a school for the little dears, our minister would be the man to tell you about the ladies who keep schools in this neighbourhood. We sit in his chapel ; he calls here sometimes,—you have happened to be out when he has come ; he isn't a grand preacher, nor nothing of that, but he is a kind man—excuse me, ma'am."

"There is nothing to excuse, Anne," I replied ; "I am very much obliged to you." And her idea was a new light. I thought I would act upon it.

On the morrow I asked her the address of this minister, and making up my mind, I went to him at once. As I walked along, I had time to remember whose were the daughters for whom I was seeking an asylum ; and when I presented myself, if my manner was not perfectly composed, it was at least such as to warrant Mr. Blanford in believing me to be a gentlewoman.

I made a short story, telling him one of his parishioners had directed me to him ; nor when he inquired, did I withhold the name and calling of the market-gardener.

Mr. Blanford was a man in years, with a wife and grown-up family. He called in his eldest daughter. "Sophie," said he, "this lady is inquiring for a young ladies' school."

"Oh, papa ! there is Miss Ashleigh's."

"True, my dear, I at once thought of her."

"Who and what is she?" I asked.

"She is a good young woman, madam," replied Mr. Blanford. "She has her mother and herself to provide for; they belong to my congregation. My elder daughters were her school companions, and they and she remain attached to each other."

"And," said Miss Sophia, "she has not a large school, and her pupils are all little ones, and she takes great pains with them."

"Has she boarders?"

"Principally day-scholars; but she had some boarders last half-year."

"Has she no boarders now?"

"She wishes to have them, ma'am, but I believe she has not any now."

"Thank you," I said; "is she a lady-like person, and well informed?"

"Oh dear, yes," said father and daughter. "Her father was an officer, and some flaw in the papers caused the mother to be deprived of the pension of an officer's widow; therefore, as I said, their only dependence is this little school. She is a person with excellent acquirements."

I asked the address of the young schoolmistress. I found it was in a healthy neighbourhood, and about one mile from my cottage.

I thanked the Blanford's heartily and took my leave. The brass plate on the door was nice and bright, with Miss Ashleigh's name upon it. I was not so exceedingly wretched when I knocked and rang the bell. A very small maid-servant admitted me to a very small parlour, where sat a very small elderly lady in a widow's cap. She had a most benevolent countenance; I felt drawn towards her. She offered me a seat, and addressed me very civilly, saying her daughter would be with me immediately; and shortly the daughter entered. She too was small, particularly so by the side of me;—I felt like a giantess pouncing down upon some lesser creature. At a glance I saw she had nothing of the heroine about her; she was a lady-like, cheerful-looking girl, *apparently* about three-and-twenty. I entered upon my *business at once*. I found her very sensible, sufficiently prudent, *and anxious to obtain pupils.*

I was not the heart-wrung person to her which I knew myself to be ; I was only the kind guardian of children, whom circumstances prevented my keeping with me for a time, and for whom I wished to select a comfortable home.

The old lady listened attentively, and her countenance perceptibly brightened, when, my voice trembling in spite of myself, I named their ages.

"Dear infants," she said.

But the young governess shook her head. "Mamma, dear," she said, "we have never taken any so young."

"True, my dear, it would be a great responsibility."

"The very fact of your being alive to the great responsibility impels me to wish you to assume it," I said.

We had a long and very particular conversation ; so long that at length Miss Ashleigh rose and said she must not be any longer absent from her pupils, and my final arrangements were to be made with the mother.

And we made them. Although the vacation was at hand, that was to make no difference ; it would be very short, and neither mother nor daughter was leaving home ; therefore, the children were to go immediately. It was all settled systematically, and Mrs. Ashleigh declined taking the address of the men of business which I offered to her as a reference ; of which I was very well pleased. Guardedly, jealously had I felt my way, and I was assured all was right as far as it was possible to judge of strangers. The aspect of the room partook of peace. The tiny fire-place and narrow mantel-piece, on which a few ornaments stood, did not look contracted, since I also now lived in a cottage. There was a bookcase in the corner, holding a few books, and a single flowerpot in the window ; a monster one it was. The beautiful "*Aram*" was in flower—"Lily of the Nile." The only handsome thing in the room was the large oil-painting over the mantel-piece, whence the husband and father glanced down on care which he no more could soothe.

Would Maria have objected to this home for her pretty little ones ? She would not, for they would be safe ; and what more at present was required for them ? As step by step I passed through trial, more humble I became ; I began to suspect there was no good thing in me. Where was the ability of which I had vaunted, since it could not procure me

the shadow of aid? Where was my future dependence to come from? To what line of life must I turn?

These thoughts succeeded each other continuously. As their last night beneath my roof, too stupified to weep, I watched my children as I should not watch them again for many nights to come—I must leave this present abode for a humbler; and I thought I must stitch. I had prepared the clothes of my darlings during some days past, and they were provided with such simple garments as best became them. I had not explicitly explained to them the fact of our having to part. I rather led them to suppose they were going to make a visit; and I trusted to novelty and the kind manner of the Ashleighs, to pacify any reluctance they might testify to being left with strangers without me. I knelt with them in our little room, with a quivering lip, to utter a prayer, the spirit of which they might imbibe. I held their hands in mine, and entreated protection and blessing from Heaven for them.

That was the moment of our parting, when I committed them to God, being driven from them myself. We walked, for it seemed less painful to me to do that than to have a carriage; and in the evening Anne's husband was to carry on their box. It was one of the very portmanteaus marked with Francisco's name, which I was to have taken abroad with me. Never had their tongues been so glib; never had they looked so lovely,—their dark waving curls under their straw hats, and their faces bright in the sunshine. My heart bled at each step. Too soon we reached our destination. Miss Ashleigh herself opened the door for me this time. She did not catch up my darlings in her arms, frightening them; but her eyes rested on them with a beaming look of interest and kindness. Then the old lady welcomed us, and took off her glasses to wipe away a tear. Nothing could be more sweet and touching than their reception; and when I tore myself away, with a vague excuse, Josephita was already nursing the kitten, whose privileged place was the hearth-rug; and Dolores sat on the old lady's knee, with her large eyes wonderingly fixed on me; and I did not even *kiss them*. I could only press the hand of Miss Ashleigh, *in acknowledgment of her simple promises of care; and the closing of the street-door fell upon my ears like a knell.*

I found myself in the cottage ; but I knew not how I had arrived there. That night I was in a stupor ; I dragged myself early to the bed where they no longer lay, and fell into a deep sleep. I slept until quite late the next day. When I awoke, Anne was standing by the side of my bed. 'What is it?' I exclaimed. At her unusual appearance, vague terror possessed me.

"Nothing is the matter, Miss Cameron, except with you, dear ; you are worn out."

She had never approached me with that tenderness before ;—trouble casts down the barriers of rank.

"I brought you a cup of tea, Miss Cameron ; now sit up and take it, it will do you good, and just eat a little bit of toast."

It looked tempting—the white-covered tray—I could not refuse. Anne did not offer to go away ; she felt, I am sure, that I was alone,—and even as she felt so, she thought I might make something of her. I saw only my landlady in her, as she stood by my bedside.

"Mrs. Lines"—it was only the second time I had called her Mrs. Lines,—“I have been very comfortable here ; but I am obliged to leave these rooms now.”

Anne gave a start.

"Yes, I assure you I am very sorry ; but I have some business which compels me to go elsewhere."

"Indeed, ma'am," she said, as if not knowing what else to say, and forgetting in her perplexity to regret my departure.

"Yes," I continued, in my cold, hopeless tone, "I am going the beginning of next week."

"I am very sorry, ma'am," then said Anne ; "I am very sorry. Is it obliged to be next week ? and won't you come back again ? The house will be lonesome without the little ladies ; but I shall never bear it without you."

"Hush," I said, affected at these simple expressions ; "do not speak in that way. You have behaved most kindly to me ; indeed, I feel towards you more as a friend than anything else."

"Oh, ma'am, if you feel so, don't leave us ; pray, pray, do stay in our rooms."

*Perhaps she penetrated the flimsy veil of "my business," which was taking me away.*



"Do consider it, ma'am ; and if you can make it convenient, just stop on as long as you please."

"But, my good woman," I said, recklessly, "supposing—which I do not say it is—that it was inconvenient to me to pay for such nice rooms, how could I possibly remain in them ? For a variety of reasons, I am obliged to have another abode ; but I thank you most heartily, and shall always bear in mind your conduct."

"Oh, don't talk of bearing in mind, Miss Cameron !" she exclaimed, for "bearing in mind," I found out, conveys a peculiar meaning to persons of her class at the lips of their superiors in station ; "pray don't, but I'll speak to my husband, indeed ma'am, and I am sure he won't know how to go after his work, if you don't make yourself comfortable ; he has such a high respect for you, Miss Cameron, and for the young ladies ; he likes you for lodgers."

I did not command this woman to meddle not in my matters ; I did not forbid her carrying them to the ears of her low-born husband. "I was sick, and she helped me." I lay a long time as if I could not rise again, then Anne came and helped me to dress myself, and she led me downstairs, and brought the cradle of her child with the infant sleeping in it to keep me company and drive evil thoughts away, while she tidied my bed-room. And truly it was a boon—the sight of that baby. I looked at it ; and if I was not comforted, I was better than I should have been without it.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Let us love one another ; not long may we stay ;  
In this bleak world of mourning some droop while 'tis day ;  
Then, ah ! though the hopes that we nourish decay,  
Let us love one another as long as we stay."

CRANSTON BARTON came to see me in the evening, and so did Helen. We talked very little ; but if I only uttered a syllable, Helen was ready to reply to it. She sat close by me, her bonnet off upon the table, and her smooth hair and her calm eyes were serene images,—a cool vision refreshing me. She did not pity me, neither did he ; nor did they

breathe hope for the future, when apparently hope was mocked. They simply saw things as they were, and as my own eyes saw them. They did not mention my children. When I named them, with a burst of grief, Helen said,—

“Dear, they are safe—be sure of that—they are guarded by a stronger arm and a deeper love than yours. The Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, He is watching them.”

I was startled by her words ; they conjured up visions of gratitude and trust. Spoken as she spoke them, they must be true. How could I think they would need *me*, when they were cared for with a mighty care ? “The Keeper of Israel !” did she say ? “who neither slumbers nor sleeps.” A light broke upon my dark soul. Helen revived the Lillie of old. Thus had my Lillie consoled me in the days of my baby woes. To my temperament, constantly rising and sinking, such consolation was incalculable.

When they were gone, Anne came in ; she knocked at the door more reverently than usual ; she came in with a tin candlestick in her hand, for it was late,—so late that Helen had been greatly alarmed on discovering the hour. We had been wrapped up in our realities.

“You won’t think of leaving us, I beg, Miss Cameron. My husband says he could not sleep in his bed if you were to go seeking among strangers, who know nothing at all about you. And, ma’am, you could not live on nothing anywhere,—you can pay us only what you must pay others. Don’t speak so, ma’am, if you please ; we are not afraid but what we shall be paid, and we don’t mind nothing about when. My husband, thank God, is a very steady young man, and we are pretty well to do. He has made a sight o’ money of his potatoes now the disease is about, for ours arn’t touched ; and the wall-fruit makes twice as much as last season, when the cholera was so bad. And setting that aside, we couldn’t rest neither of us, Miss Cameron, and I with that dear baby, and don’t know what it may come to before it dies,—for you to go away, nobody knows where. Oh, don’t look so, ma’am ; I know what you are—anybody as sees you sees the look of a lady ; and though this is a little place, Miss Cameron, it’s an honest man’s roof, and *that’s more than can be said of all the lodgings in Londe*

Please to stay contentedly, ma'am ; and as for the pay, I am very well sure things will come round. All those papers you sit and write, I'm sure they're worth something, if you did but know where,—and you'll find out, depend upon it, some time."

Anne continued to talk, warming as she proceeded, and, I have no doubt, expecting momentarily that I should stop her tongue ; but I could not have done it for the world, though I was astonished.

"My husband says this 'Weekly Journal,' that has a sight of fine reading in it, is all written by different people ; and he thinks they must get a deal o' money for writing, considering how it circulates, and how it must pay them who edit it. Supposing, dear, you were to just send a bit of a scrap, written off when you are not feeling so unhappy, and let us see if they are not glad of it. There's often beautiful poetry in it. My husband reads it sometimes, though we don't take it ; for he says, though there is a deal o' good reading in it, and working-men like to know as well as gentlefolks what's going on, he doesn't think the paper does good. He says how the men sit in the beer-houses, and how they get to high words over reading it, and there's often broken heads where the 'Weekly Journal' is took in. There's speeches in it as stirs the men up, and they can't justly understand it, while they think they do. And another thing, Miss Cameron, it comes out on a Sunday, and it's a bad thing for a newspaper to come out on a Sunday, it's a something to look for, and it takes them as can't afford to buy it out of their homes of a Sunday to them as can ; and it is more than anything else keeps folks from a place of worship. The newspaper does them more harm than the music in the parks. You'll excuse me being so free, Miss Cameron ; and, dear, won't you go to bed ? you seem so wearied. I'll go up with you myself. Never think about leaving me ; that point's settled—so long as I can wait on you to suit you, that is."

I gave her a look for an answer, and I let her put me to bed. The next morning I felt better. I thought over all *she had said* ; how reasonable it was, how sensible the *arguments*, and her idea was not to be despised. I *knew better*, at a future time, what true views this woman had

taken from her husband, when I learned how morally and intellectually good the editor of that paper was ; but that he issued the "Weekly Journal" for a purpose,—it is the great machine of the mechanics. She said truly it had a wide circulation. There is scarcely a house in many working districts where every Sunday morning it does not appear, and generally consumes the time which on that day should be better employed. The time came when I lamented that so gifted a man should issue those sparkling paragraphs, which inflame but do not elevate. Yet there are portions, written by himself, of high excellence ;—the gravest thoughts, the purest poetry, are penned by him. I presume it does not occur to him to alter the course of a system which is of years' standing ; therefore the leading articles of that paper do not furnish food for the need of the present time.

No one doubts the excellence of its writer's heart, who is acquainted with his private life, his devotion to his wife, his fond tenderness to one daughter, and his paternal pride in the other ; nor can they doubt his sunny intellectuality, who see the clubs where he bands brothers—men who regard him as without a peer—among whom his wit and repartee are the least of his attractions. There is a superlative charm in the friendship men feel for each other, who are thrown together and linked together not only by interest but pure regard.

I was introduced to him in the Crystal Palace, the day the Guides' band played there. He was leaning on the arm of that young man who, down to the handwriting, wishes to make a copy of his patron, and who owes him everything. I admired the benevolence of his face, and the grey silk-like hair above it came in for its share of my admiration ; and I saw him smile—the smile was inimitable. He returned to me my sable boa, which by accident he rescued from beneath the feet of the crowd ; and I had the full benefit of the smile on the occasion of this inexpressive benevolence. But I did not feel as if I could write again just at present. I settled myself into the niche ordained for me by Anne's decisive arguments ; and, getting embroidery and German-wool patterns, I stitched through those long hot days.

*When they had been one month away, which was the period I had laid down in which I would not see my dear*

lings, affording all of us time to be resigned to our separation, I went to visit them. I found them as well, and better than I had expected; indeed, I could not be sufficiently thankful. They looked healthy, and beautiful, and good. What more could I desire? I found Mrs. Ashleigh was in the habit of taking them into the garden of the square where they ran about, and amused themselves, and many other little children. Dolores was the first to perceive me, and she flew towards me. What a tender little heart it was; and how it loved me! The little birdie was not half so demonstrative. They were both evidently contented. I felt better than I had done for weeks, when I left them. Then I wrote again to Maria, from whom I heard regularly, and to whom I wrote regularly; and I dwelt on the many little things that would charm her, carefully hiding that they were not with me, or that any cause existed to separate them from me. I had previously written that my marriage was abandoned, and that I resided in London; and that with their confidence in me, was sufficient upon my own affairs. I never entered any further into them for years, why should I? I could but have caused them untold anxiety, when I should not have accepted any benefit from them. I made a will, in case of my death, by which I placed the charge of the children in Cranston Barton's hands, till he could communicate with their father and mother. I had no one else to trust them with; and I too care that all should be in due form, to be recognized by the agents of their father.

I contrived, to use a homely expression, to keep body and soul together, during the next three months; occasionally Cranston and Helen came to see me, and we went to her some minister together, if it was Sunday, which it generally was. Sunday visiting is a very bad thing; but works of necessity, piety, and charity may be done on the Sabbath day; and I believe their visits to me might rank among the last. We went sometimes to the places of the Established Church, or if not, we preferred to hear a preacher whose name was at that time upon many tongues, for he had laid aside every worldly consideration in obedience to certain conscientious dictates, and renouncing rank, wealth, and distinction alike, he had seceded from a position he held to

false ; his patrician congregation did not follow him, to sit under his plebeian pulpit ; but doubtless he enjoyed the peace of God. On one occasion when we heard him, he alluded to the recent consecration of bishops, opposing the office as unscriptural, but rejoicing that the choice of men had been so worthily made. Predicting "the dawn of a better day to the English church, since good men were raised to high places." But for his recent abnegation, he would himself have filled that late vacant bishopric—but sees and mitres were beneath his feet ; they who listened to him recognized that.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
The marks of that which once hath been.

COLERIDGE.

WITH a faint hope of realizing a few pounds to defray my babies' vacation expenses—for I had not been driven to apply for supplies to meet simply their maintenance yet,—I set to work in the end of October to try my pen again. My will was good, and so was my ability, as succeeding time proved ; but neither was to be yet crowned with success.

After what Anne had said, I could not bring myself to swell a Sunday newspaper. I tried periodicals, but in vain,—I received no answers. I went on drearily, but more rapidly, with my needle. I had no prospect of repaying Cranston Barton, and I had expended three parts of his loan ; and I hardly knew how I could meet the needs of Christmas. But I did meet them. I worked hard, and we never wanted for suitable provisions for my darlings ; and a happy, beautiful season we had that month. Yes, happy ! no one could doubt it, who heard our voices, and saw our faces, catching the reflection of one another's. Nobody could have supposed I was toiling as I was, day by day ; nor would they have conceived that care was nigh, when I was familiar with want, in prospect, every hour of each day. The songs we sang in the blind man's holiday—the cats' cradles we made—the rabbits and greyhounds, with our fingers upon th

wall—the pictures we drew—and occasionally the young ladies went out to tea in the kitchen, for Miss Lines liked to entertain company.

By the middle of January the children were quite impatient to see Mrs. and Miss Ashleigh again, and my second deposition of my treasures was very different to what my first had been. But I felt very lonely without them, and set to work the faster.

Whether it was the work, or traitor memory, or what, I know not; but sitting over the little grate with a shawl round my shoulders, I got mists before my eyes, and felt heats coming over me at intervals, while occasional sharp pains shot across my temples, and I had to rest a minute in my work. Rebellious heart! the voice of it would not be stilled. It was the middle of February, a year, within a few days, since I left Findon Rectory—since I left *him*. Memory was a weary ache, ever there, though not a pang in the labour of the months before the vacation, and the joy that marked it. I was horrified at the throbbings of my heart, as day by day fresh anniversaries laid bare the wounds of the past; at length I could hold up no longer, the head will droop, the trembling fingers will not ply; the tears will come; and Anne shakes her head, and is shocked at her inattention, and carries me off to bed; and when that day came round on which I was to have been a bride, I was lying in the stupor succeeding delirium in an attack of fever similar to that which seized me when Francisco left me; and I had been tended, though kind Mrs. Barton had gone to her rest. Though hers were cold, fond hands had been found to smooth my pillow and bathe my temples. Helen had been fetched to assist in nursing me. She had had no Christmas vacation—she seldom had vacations, for she had only an old maiden aunt to visit in Kent, who was cross and selfish, and cared very little about her dead sister's child. By dint, therefore, of some circumlocution, Helen obtained a fortnight's holiday—holiday! poor Helen, how did she spend it? taxing her sufficiently overwrought strength, losing her rest (sleep was out of the question, *where lay one in brain fever*); running up and down with *young willing legs*, always declaring tirelessly. I struggled *through*, with good medical attendance and the earnest care

of my nurses, and this second attack (I always think, like my mother's, this fever will be my end) did not kill me. I awoke once more, to hear that my children were well and happy; that my recovery would be an era of joy in my nurses' lives; that they were neither of them weary; that it was the first week in March; and that a letter had arrived for me. The only thing that was not impressed upon me when, a fortnight afterwards I crept down stairs, pale, thin, and aguish, but quiet, better in mind, more resigned, was that there was the doctor's bill to pay.

My natural anxieties, however, pressing upon me, did not hasten my recovery; I was some time before I could hold a needle, and perhaps a more forlorn party never sat together with the appearances of comfort about them, than we were who considered once more what there was that could be done.

Once more, like the flickering of the expiring flame, the craving of the spirit that was within me made itself heard—not, thank Heaven! ephemeral like that—though what a desolation did it light! We sat in rooms for which two months' (at least) back rent was owing. There was Cranston's loan of the thirty pounds—and the doctor's awful bill; while I was so tremulous with weakness of body, that I was utterly incapable of fetching or delivering the articles from the bazaar, which I knew not how to execute.

"Cranston! I'll try once more. I know that — is a good man; if he will neither accept, nor reply to me, I'll never write again. Madness as it is, I'm determined to make the attempt."

Useless they evidently thought it; but when another is at a last extremity, and ourselves cannot aid, we are tenacious of impeding the feeblest effort; we begin to see impossibilities; we imagine some marvellous hand may be about to stretch out and save. Thus was it with Cranston: he neither encouraged nor discouraged; he left me to do as I willed. The sense of which gave me a sickening feeling; for I saw how hopelessly alone I was, how forsaken of all the world. Scarcely a deeper guiltless despondency can *have overtaken* an unfortunate than mine was that night. *yet to others who have suffered, and who may suffer again*



for whom I write this history, I say "Do not despair; gird up your hearts resolutely; help comes at the last;" for I found it so.

To those who lose crowns and empires; to the paralyzed refugees, who are expiring in their cellars, born the nobility of kingdoms; to those whose cup either of honour or power has been ruthlessly dashed from their lips, it may seem to these great ones of the earth a fable to speak of my despair. But the heart can bear but so much pain before it lies at rest; only so much of human woe can fill a fleshly vessel; and if our mind, and heart, and soul, are all wrought up to the last endurance, what matter whether the name they encircle belong to Napoleon at St. Helena, or to some such insignificant woman as I sat that night in the humble cottage of my lodging in Camden Town? I had struggled to the utmost, I could do no more. With labour and remembrance well-nigh slain, with a frame trembling, a mind exhausted, and a heart that half prayed to be still for ever, over which all this burden of heavenly charity was almost expended in vain, so black was the midnight darkness,—that night, oh daughters of grief and care! was the eve of a brighter day. Suffer this to console you! Thus have women ever consoled each other, while the multitude world rides proudly by, with power and splendour in her train, and to whom the figures of you and I, as we sit by the road-side, in our garments of sackcloth and ashes, are no more than the dust of the ground, which their prancing horses throw over us.

Before I went to bed that night, though my hand could scarcely hold a pen, I wrote once more a blank-verse poem, short. It partook of the character of that time, and was solemn. I sealed it up, with my name and residence, and wrote the superscription to the editor of a periodical of large circulation. I told Anne what I had done, when she came to me in the morning.

"That's right, dear; it does me good now to see that you're picking up again. Who knows? perhaps it's just the thing, and you'll see a deal spring from it."

*As she brought in my breakfast, she said, "I hope it isn't too melancholy."*

*"Such as it is, Anne, it is done, I cannot alter it."*

ngered.

"You are about it, dear, suppose you wrote something"—she had decided that what I had written was my own—lyric—"and send it to some of those picture-books they like poetry."

Right I would do so, as she said, now I was about it. I felt, that if I failed this time, failure for ever, for I should never try again. When Anne came, she posted another of a much lighter character to the editress of a then current magazine. I went to fetch my babies to spend two days with me on this event, for I felt an indescribable longing to look at them again. They came, and holding them very close to me, I told them how good God had been to us.

He had very nearly taken me away, but that (I perhaps for their sakes) He had let me live a little. They could understand a great deal of English now, I asked me some thrilling questions, and talking with my spirit was almost lifted out of itself. Dolores and I trembled, and the baby birdie ceased to smile, I felt towards them much, I ween, as a mother feels towards her own. I spent a fortnight almost unemployed, and did so little.

Oh! bright day, one of *the* "days of my life," I received letters; it was singular they should come together; one from him in whose noble heart, in the full tide of youth, there is room for human kindness. My poem was returned to me, but with a letter of some length containing the editor's criticisms upon my composition, his regret that my poem was of too mournful a tone for admission into his pages, but thanking (thanking!) me for giving him the favour to present it; advising that I attempt something bolder and healthier, and concluding with the declaration that no further notice could be given of any contributions of mine (on account of press which would not admit of general correspondence), that I offered was acceptable. The other envelope, from a person of my sex, and far my inferior in all mental endowments, if I may be pardoned a conclusion drawn from subsequent experiences, contained these words, "The Editor of the '*—— Magazine*' acknowledges the receipt of

several oracular sentences, but why they were sent to *her* she is at a loss to imagine, as the '—— Magazine' has always hitherto been considered a depository for sanity." I committed *that* epistle to the fire.

And now then the other. My poetry was too *mournful*! And he regretted it. I had received attention then at last. Though the letter was a declination, though my poor lines were returned, still the voice had been heard; I was encouraged; it was not all a delusion. My poem had been thought worthy of comment. It had not been thrown carelessly aside; it had been honestly read.

In the course of that week I wrote an article, the first with any solid matter in it, I believe, I ever penned, and having written upon the envelope, "No reply, nor is the return of the manuscript desired, except at Mr. ——'s pleasure," I sent that to its place, and in due time I received its wages. Can any one guess what I felt at the sight of that first money? What visions of plenty and peace, to say nothing of reputation, that fairy image built? Delighted, I yet hushed my knowledge; mine was the triumph, mine should be the suspense; I would not share either, until the one was established, and the other past.

I took stock and measured my position; it was a very bad one. It was now the end of April, the summer vacation would soon be here, and my debts were frightful. But I took courage, I was seen to smile; I wrote more freely, with less of the leaden weight upon me.

Again my paper was received. This time I bought a number, to see if my work was in it. It was not; but no matter, it *would* be published, and I had its price. I did not attempt any other publication; that would have seemed to me a tampering, with my benefactor. I was content with small things, and I lived on hope now. I wrote an article, and when it was acknowledged, I commenced writing another; but this was slow work; however, I waited with patience and trust.

When my babies were home, I no longer concealed my encouragement. On one of those evenings when *beforetime* we had been so miserable, I took Cranston and *Helen* into my secret, while Anne put the babes to bed; and after they were gone, I told Anne also how my fortunes

were brightening, and all my friends rejoiced with me in my dawning prosperity, as they had lamented with me during my rayless adversity. And groping along pretty nearly in the dark, but looking neither to the right nor to the left, I held on my way.

Months went on, and I took courage; I passed from one step to another, and thankfully I called myself successful. And another winter's snow came down, round the happy home which sheltered me; and I sat on the Christmas-eve with my children, growing so fine and tall,—they were five and six years old now; and I had paid my arrears of rent, and my heavy doctor's bill; I owed nothing but Cranston's thirty pounds. Nothing! it was a large sum; but it should be paid. And so it was. I was writing now in several quarters, still personally unknown to any editor. The following summer I was able to repay Cranston's loan; my children still learned of Mrs. and Miss Asbleigh all that they required. I wrote and received continuous letters from the far-distant land. They were, as they had ever been, struggling along,—a different struggle to mine, but still a struggle. Maria's letters—each higher and tenderer in its strain, purified and refined in the half-defined prosperity, the honour and integrity, of her husband—fell sweetly upon my heart; and his—each stamped with a firmer signet than the one which came before, the conscious power of strength, the soldier-general, the people's statesman—were not *his* meat and drink to my soul? And the daughters they beheld not, grew up in their beauty, the delight of my eyes and the joy of my life, and they were blest with as promising an heir as any other high house. I laboured on, and not without drawbacks, nor did I escape great straits; and Cranston and Helen were at last going to be married.

That autumn I suffered greatly with my eyes, and could not see to write; and having with difficulty straightened my affairs, I had nothing to fall back upon. It was not consolatory to sit half blind, while the days were fleeting by, knowing that if my sight were re-established, I had no definite idea of when that would be. The ophthalmist, whom I was compelled to call in, advised operations, and horrible contingencies presented themselves to my mind. I was certain

very unhappy, wrong as I was, with past experience, to be cast down. But I had a dread that other pens would be found to write in my stead.

Some weeks of this had gone on, when, late one Saturday night, I heard the laundress bring home my linen, and Anne taking it upstairs; never so much as turning to my room to ask me for the two shillings to which it amounted, at which I did not possess. This had happened beforetime. To-night it gave me a great turn. I was shocked, though it was such a trivial thing, and I could not help crying though that weakness was pronounced fatal to my eyesight.

Anne must have heard me, for she opened the door; and when she saw how I was behaving, she came in and stood near me. Presently she asked what it was about, and after a considerable time I was sufficiently foolish to tell her. For the first time in my life I thought her unfeeling, for she laughed.

"Miss Cameron," she said, "did you never hear, when the Duke of Laughton wanted to pass over Waterloo-bridge, neither he nor his groom were worth a penny to pay the toll with?"

I stared at her. Her countenance was so comical, as always her story, that her laughing became infectious. "There one point gained," I heard Anne say as she went out with her tin candlestick, "I've heard her laugh again."

And while I wept, in this bitter strait, that a good woman should lend me two shillings without my asking her for; and while she consoled me in that strange way, and there was beauty in the wide world, with its blending of the forlorn and the true,—I know not whether it was that evening, but certainly it was that week, a gondola shining through the shining waters of a by-stream of Venice; as resting his oars by the marble stairs which led to a noble palace, the gondolier chanted his even-song to the Virgin as a personage still in the prime of life sprang out of the gondola and ran up the steps leading to the delicious garden. And there was no form to compare with his in the gondolier's reminiscences, neither another voice so sweet in the accents of command. And the face of the English "Milor" is bright with pride and pleasure; and she springs from the fountain's side—she is scarcely having

w, so much she loves him. She is lovelier than before ;  
 d then, doubtless, though I beheld it not, his arm encircled  
 r, and her beautiful hair drooped down upon his breast ;  
 r over the clear and star-lit waves the burden-song of the  
 ws went forth of William Russell and Lucy Raymond.  
 t a Venetian *soirées* of art, where English and Italian beauty  
 d talent thronged, they two—the indisputable lions—  
 volved in their separate orbits ; and imperceptibly attracted  
 each other, that they should meet was a natural circum-  
 stance ; and having met, that the rest should follow, was  
 air destiny.

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## CHAPTER XL.

“The present pales before the past,  
 Who comes with angel wings ;  
 As in a dream I stand, amidst  
 Strange and familiar things !  
 And one voice speaks, in tones I thought  
 The past for ever kept ;  
 But now I know deep in my heart  
 Its echoes only slept.”

r sight was improved in the course of the winter, and I  
 is able again to use my eyes ; and I had much for which  
 be thankful, and many sources of consolation.

Cranston and Helen were married now, and occasionally  
 visited them, while they frequently came to me ; but I  
 as not able to earn more than my needs swallowed up ; I  
 uld not compass the laying by for a rainy day.

They lived in a comfortable house, in which Cranston's  
 adio was by far the largest room ; and he was making  
 od prices, and gradually picking up his fortunes. That I  
 ew from time to time, or they would not have married ;  
 d at this time I, who had received so many benefits,  
 tually found myself repining ; I, who had tasted want, and  
 o had been rescued from it,—I found myself asking why  
 had not a creature near and dear to soften my troubles and  
 old me bliss. I was young still—that is, not old,—I was  
 enty-seven. I appeared years older than my age, and  
 asessed an old experience ; but at twenty-seven a long  
*time may stretch out before us. I grew to be irritable*

and angry, vexed with trifles, and impatient even with poor Anne. It was dreadful ; I felt it so. I bitterly repented this ; but more or less the old curse of my high spirit has always hung about me, the necessity of having something unique over which to tyrannize. Prophetic feelings must have charged my mother's dying words: "Blessed are the meek.

The secret resolved itself thus ;—though never one of those who surrounded me, heard or guessed the truth, though not even the delirium of fever betrayed its existence to them ; though it lay in my heart as still as if it and I were buried,—no death had fallen upon the image which lay shrouded there. I confessed it not to myself ; yet so many wonders had happened to me—so much of sorrow, so much of pleasure, had come unexpectedly to me, that I verily believe I cherished the breath (for it was nothing more) that if it were to be fifty years hence, I might see him again one day ; and if not see him, hear of him, if only to be told he was alive. Oh ! I worshipped his memory though I durst not even pray for him, in so many words that would have uprooted fabrics of hard-earned serenity that would have laid me down again in another fever. But earth held no treasure to compare in my soul with him. It was not a man, it was barely a shape, the memory assumed, but it enwrapt my being. In one of my temporary fits of prostration, when my pen did not ply, and my head was sick, and I had so recently sent my children to school—I would not have them home for their sweet company to waft the evil spirit away—Cranston walked over to see me. He stayed a very few minutes ; he came to fetch a book. He walked down the garden with him. As he stood with the little gate in his hand, he said, turning suddenly, "Oh, I have nearly forgotten to tell you—I got news to-day ; it is very rare for me to get news from Lynwood, but Mitchell, my old college friend, is down staying with the Raymonds. They've had a gay time there of late ; you'll be like the late rose of summer, Mary."

He spoke with the lightest gaiety, but something stood still within me. Oh, I hoped he was going to tell me Edward Raymond at length had married. He waited for me to question him ; but he saw I was pale and anxious, and then he said more seriously, "Your old friend Lucy is married."

The gasp I gave!—the earth was opening beneath me. By what impulse I know not, but I leapt at fatality. I stood with parted lips, he wondering at my excessive agitation; and it did not recur to him, as he leant over the little gate, that he had not told me all, and I was as if the earth that had opened, had swallowed me up.

I managed to utter, "Who is it she married?"

"Mary! you alarm me; why it's a very good match—family and fortune, and all that sort of thing; she has married a man named Russell."

What need to be told it? Did I not know it intuitively? Who else should she have married?

I bade Cranston Barton leave me; I would have none of his care; I dismissed him as I *could* dismiss any who were *de trop*. I turned to the door; could I see before me? I saw no one. There was only Anne, and she was spared the shock. I took down a bonnet I had long ceased to wear, and winding an old shawl round my shoulders, I rushed out anywhere, anywhere, so long as under no roof; only in the air could my lungs play. I know not which way I went, what people must have thought of me, what I felt myself; I was conscious only of a great blow having fallen upon me. I must have walked for many hours, but I knew not where or how; then I became aware that the lamps were lighted along the streets, and therefore, as it was August, it must have been ten o'clock. There could have been no greater crush than in the hours before, in the streets through which I paced; but suddenly I was sensible of a mist before my eyes, while every other quickened sense foretold some approach.

A moment and the mist had cleared away; I was in Trafalgar Square, and the fountains played as usual, and I was within a few yards of Morley's Hotel;—my sight was cleared in time. In a moment I saw a dark travelling-carriage with a superb pair of bays; they were dashing along from the side of Pall Mall, and as they turned the angle, a child of the lower order ran in the horses' way. I beheld the aspect of that carriage—it was unmistakable; but even the sight of it did not paralyze the fierce instinct to save. It was late enough as I sprang into the road, and catching the boy with my hands, flung him from me; the



foremost horse had caught the clothes with his emitting foot ; and both the horses fell back on haunches, as, just in time for the saving of life, they reined them in.

More of the child I saw not, nor heard any though the witnessing throng doubtless praised a of my apparent order for such a startling act. clinging round the lamp-post, with lungs that breathed now—for I beheld *him* ! Once again we met. I drank in the old accustomed glory, for he was still as ; as in the time of yore—as like Ignatius Loyola,—an heart there was human pity still,—I had not frozen the springs of trust and love. I heard his voice dashing down the windows, he called to inquire child were hurt ; for his quick eye had discerned peril and the rescue, and well I knew that he was by both. He glanced to where I clung in deadly fear but wholly sensible—of course he knew not me. How he recognize the self-possessed woman he had won, in the wretched night-walker, in appearance fallen than she could ever be ? But I felt the light of his eyes, as I imbibed his presence—that, one moment more would have passed from me quibbling the man drive on, he flung down from the to the spot where I stood, a small handful of coin. a hoarse laugh behind me ; but I could not spare time he was vanishing, to catch up my treasure ; the carriage dashed on a few steps more, *that* held my soul, as the on in their Power, in their Splendour, in their Majesty and a speck on the fathomless sea is more potent bosom, than upon the waves of the life she had he lay the love of the woman who adored him. A carriage drew up with another shock, and the flung down the broad stone steps, and I saw those two all saw him place a mantle about her, and lead her and tenderly ; and the crowd around, and the flung their side, and the carriage driving away, they entered brilliantly lighted hotel ; and I snatched in my hand pavement and street, the coins which his fingers had as they shone, in the glare of the lamp, and rushing the street, I fell down against the stone monument

I looked up, I was in a police-office, and a drunken man lay on the floor, and a man sat by with a baby in his arms, and two lads who were thieves tossed up halfpence in the corner, and I felt clasped in my stiffened fingers a thing that was not there—robbers had defrauded me of my treasures, who stole them only because they were poor, and I might not have even the *alms* he had bestowed on a *pauper*.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

"A golden cage of sunbeams  
Half down a rainbow hung;  
And sweet therein a golden bird  
The whole bright morning sung!—  
It was hope's golden bird!"

Mr. Weston and Helen, and Anne and her husband, all knew something had happened, when the livelong night and lawning day succeeded each other, and home came not the recipient of their bounty. And when in the middle of the day, wan, pale, and famished, with the unconfessed light of my life extinguished, I returned, they never asked me what it was. And presently, with the solemnity of grief, I told them that I had been stricken,—that the iron had been forced into my soul, and that no one could share my pain. They did not torture me; they provided me bodily comforts; and I was as a babe in their hands once more, though not, again as they expected, in the terrible fever's hold. It did not come then when it was most probable that it would; only a dormititude succeeded that dreadful night.

It was three months before I saw my children, three months before I touched a pen. But when I did see them, I was at last that they were my all of love; and taking my leave I knew that it was for ever my only provision. And the last of human blows descended upon me and I lived on; I felt that there was a purpose in all we suffer; and usually, after that, my mind settled down into a calm. The austere nature admitted at last that a blessing instead of a curse had come, since no cup so bitter could be in store as that of which I had drunk the dregs.

A year from this time I published a work on my account.

A baby now was in Cranston's home, a baby face Helen's neck ; but I did not envy her. *His* child possessed another mother, younger, and far more fair, and purer, I envied not.

The wife's love and the mother's love were blotted out me ; but already I looked to a distant home, where of blessed ties would combine to erase the loss of these.

Yes ! from this time my energies were concentrated, I had but one goal, and I was writing with eager impatience (for I could be eagerly impatient still, and about the *fruit* of the labour), with the hope of insuring a competence. down the vista of years lay age, for which pride would provide ; for, the pride of the heart a sepulchred ghost, pride of the mind remained ; and in the time which intervened before my children were maidens and meet for transplantation, I fain would make myself a subsistence the years that might lie beyond ; that they in their beauty and I in independence might enter at last that distant home rocked by the surging sea. Grown wiser by knowledge of the field of experience, I had compiled a work now ; and was neither poetry nor history, as the first had been. it was just a true story built from daily life ; with sin details and faithful characters, and written carelessly, with care ; that is, with no namby-pamby sentimentalism and with an eye to the public taste, the only road to public mind ; and, oh ! the vulgar romanceless though uneschewed by the wealthiest writers, the only road to public purse, and thence into mine ; for without purses don't cross the Atlantic, and establish a residency beyond and they who inherit noble hearts cannot accept generosity and so it was the business of my life, after all my hom to mind, to secure the means to do that, and I am ashamed to confess it.

It was an equal and fair exchange ; my talent for their pleasure, and their gold for a home for me,—for *me* once in a home.

*And that year proved a happy year to me. My book published with tolerable éclat, and made me "a reputation which, though certainly not brilliant, certainly was*

ephemeral. And adopting the title which had made its way, to introduce others following after, I continued quietly to advance, with a fair share of public favour and ever-increasing funds: and in 184— Anne and her husband gave up the cottage where we had lived so many years; and we all shed tears when we finally exchanged it for a house more becoming our present circumstances in the neighbourhood of Berkeley Square; a very good house, of which they were the holders, and which they were to let. The first floor was taken by me, as I could not be separated from Mrs. Lines, any more than her excellent husband.

We should not have fixed upon so expensive a locality but for this reason. Miss Ashleigh was about to be married, and to take her mother to live with her in the country (her intended husband was Mr. Blanford's eldest son); and the talented daughters of Don Francisco de la Vega, my beloved wards, required their education to be continued in a very superior establishment; and weakness associates superior value in things of this sort with superior expenditure; therefore I decided that only at the West End could I meet with what they required.

The first thing I did in my new domain, was to arrange in a smaller room adjoining my own, a bed, with pretty muslin-work, having ribbons and reliefs of blue, suiting their olive skins; for my darlings were only to leave me in the days; they were not to be boarders at school.

There were many designs of Anne's, which I assisted to carry out, awakening my long dormant capacities, to suit a large house, causing Anne to pronounce triumphantly that "a lady, and nobody but a lady, could do things so." Cranston and Helen brought home my babies, who had spent a few days with them, to be out of the way of our flitting. I call them babies, but they were well-grown girls now. Dolores, with the soft glorious eyes, and her mother's calm smile, she was now twelve years old. Yes, since that day, on board the *Senator*, when the blood of kindred asserted its might, and Francisco's child clung tight and close around my stranger neck, eight long years had flown;—eight years of mingled toil and rest—of mingled grief and joy—of mingled fear and hope. And Josephita's glittering eyes and her black shining ringlets, made an absolute radiance

with the delight of eleven years old ; for here was a great beautiful house, which she was going to live in. She did not bewail the cottage flowers, which we left with regret, for there were pictures and ornaments here quite new to her. And in the hurry of going on a visit, Dolores had not forgotten to carry in her hand the pet canary, cage and all ; and here he was, the trilling songster, silent now from excess of wonder ; but doubtless to-morrow he would find his voice, and we should retain one living remembrancer of the holy cottage, with the garden before it, rife with worlds of pain and love, in unpretending Camden Town.

The señoritas had professors for music, a professor for drawing, and for dancing, and I know not what beside ; but I never feared that my charming daughters would be spoiled by much effect. Their minds were fresh and healthy, so happy had they been in the choice of their early instructress ; yet had I felt bitter grief in committing them to strangers.

And two little sons were by Cranston's hearth ; and in Cranston's pictures, as in other years, the female heads had a marvellous expression, which few people knew belonged to his wife ; for, although she had numerous invitations to *conversaciones* and other *soirées* of the literary and artistic, Helen went little into society : she preferred the companionship of her children to that of the world. But there were times when she accompanied her husband, to his pleasure and pride ; and whenever she did so, some good fortune was sure to follow on the morrow. Cranston's position as an historical painter was quite fixed now. He enjoyed a certain reputation, which, like the reputation of my authorship, if it was not brilliant, was satisfactory. Helen was not ambitious for the high places of the world ; she only regretted that greater appreciation did not meet his pictures, when she saw her husband restless ; for a true artist must be ambitious—the breath of his life is fame.

It was in the spring, after our removal to our new abode, that great efforts were made by his friends to elect Cranston a member of the Royal Academy. Year by year that honour had eluded his grasp, and it was with a feeling new to *him*—that of angry bitterness,—that he saw others far *younger* in the field, and one or more who had been his *pupils*, and whose strength lay in interest in certain quarters

not in their superior artistic excellence, elected before himself. They were not his peers—but they were more fortunate. It was not that the pecuniary benefit was a consideration, although the smallest certain provision to come to a wife and family of children, in case of any improbable calamity, is a comfortable reflection for any man, be he wealthy or poor. But Cranston's pictures fetched good prices now. One evening I had a visit from them both—Mr. and Mrs. Cranston Barton; and sitting beside me on the couch, Helen told me a story. The elections for the ensuing year were just made. The evening before, she and her husband had been at a *soirée*, at the house of a friend who was warmly interested in Cranston's nomination, from the fact of his being a patron of art, and also an excellent critic. Absent to attend the election, this gentleman was to return to his house immediately the meeting was over, bringing, as he gaily said to Helen, honours for her husband. Helen accompanied her husband there, and shared the suspense with him, terminated at a late hour by the appearance of their friend; but he brought not the honours; and disgusted with a distribution of favours with so slight regard to merit, he protested indignation against such a palpable subversion of the laws of right and justice. It remained for the painter and his wife to accord a short space to the requirements of society, and then to withdraw to their quiet home, where, if they carried disappointment, they also carried love; and, to judge from their faces—she who was speaking, and he who sat by smiling over her recital—genius might sigh, but the heart was at rest. And the peace which was between themselves purchased a purer happiness than the honourable rewards of a profession universally admitted sweet. We three concluded that we should be glad if prouder fame awaited us somewhere down in the future; but should we rise no higher than the present, so many benefits had fallen to our share, that we should be recreants to be craving more,—and I am sure we spoke sincerely.

## CHAPTER XLII.

The spirit of Beauty unfurls her light,  
 And wheels her course in a joyous flight !  
 DAWES.

DOLORES and Josephita were at an age now to write largely to their parents, whose letters to them were in turn so frequent, that these persons, separated by distance and time, appeared wholly familiar to each other. A trifling incident worthy of detail to the parents was fully remitted by the children, and they received also, time to time, minute particulars of their parents, brother, and their home.

Constantino had been placed some years since at a school in Valparaiso, in which, for many years, the youth of better families had been prepared for the subsequent studies of the schools of Europe, where it was thought necessary these young men should conclude their education.

That we should change our house at this time was deemed the more desirable, because we were now expected to see Constantino in England ; before his arrival, however, we received a piece of intelligence more grateful to me than the expected coming of my young relation. Cranston, alone told me any Lynwood news, gave me this which was thus acceptable. At length Edward Raymond was married, and the dark shadow of another's happiness wilfully withdrawn by me was taken from my soul.

Immediately after I heard this, the coming of Constantino was postponed, and we did not see him for eighteen months, which time passed very tranquilly with us. When a carriage drove up to the door, out of which sprang a young gentleman, whose parentage could not be mistaken by any one who had seen a Cameron (he was very like me, but the resemblance reflected a compliment on myself), we were prepared to receive and welcome the stranger.

When the first greetings had subsided, I think we felt the awkward sensations consequent upon such meetings. It was extraordinary to have an additional member in our family, so nearly allied to us, yet personally unknown. It is true himself and his sisters had met, but, with their united precocity, we questioned if the babe in his nurse's arms, who was carried to the spot where lay *El Perou*, waiting for her living freight, bound for Europe, exhibited sensibility of the departure, and certainly he retained no memorial of it. The tears and the smiles which attended his little sisters that day leaving their native land were lost upon Constantino, while, on their parts, during the years succeeding, they with difficulty associated that baby-boy with a tall strong brother. Here, then, were the whole of Francisco's family met together in my house. Very pleasant it was to me. Constantino spoke very good English, and when we were a little accustomed to his accent, we were at no loss to converse with him. Anne spread a table of English refreshments before our guest, and he did them ample justice; and as our strangeness wore away, we laughed and chatted together, and he told us stories about the voyage, and of his college in Valparaiso, and we were all delighted.

I could do little but scrutinize the face of this boy, so dear to me;—I was eager to be acquainted with its every expression. It was not a handsome face, but every feature in it was good; the eyes were fine, having a frank, pleasant light in them, while already round the mouth were the fixed lines denoting character. I left the room to discuss with Anne the necessary steps consequent upon an arrival. Fortunately we were not now confined to a small space; our dear visitor did not inconvenience us in any point of view.

When I returned to the drawing-room, there was perfect ease amidst the young ones. Josephita was seated upon her brother's important knee. He was eighteen months her junior,—that is, he was eleven and a half years of age, but he was a great boy, and she was rather a little girl of thirteen, and the effect was not uncomfortable. Dolores sat by them close, very close; and seeing the faces of the three as I opened the door, I knew it was neither the voyage, nor the college, nor any trifling incidents, of which they



were talking now ; but subjects a thousand times more interesting, dear to them all, and *sacred* to Dolores.

"She came down to the ship with me," Constantino was saying, "and was very sorry to see me leave her ; she wept, for there is no child with her now. Papa also came on board with me, and he ordered me, 'Give to your sisters a thousand embraces on my part ;' and suiting the action to the word, Constantino embraced his little sister, according to the style of their country, taking her in his arms twice, and pressing her to his breast ; and Dolores stretched out her arms also to receive the deputed tenderness of her father, at her young brother's hands ; and I brought a low chair near them, and Dolores was not too old to hang about me, and we asked many questions, which the boy answered smilingly, pleased to have so much to tell to anxious eager listeners ; and I felt as if I could scarcely wait the three remaining years which would complete the period indefinitely fixed for our leaving England for Peru.

When the personal appearances of papa and mamma had been duly and admiringly described, and duly and admiringly commented upon, and I was fancying what Francisco must be at thirty-five years old, and Maria, who was three years younger, Dolores exclaimed, "What a change you will see in papa and mamma, Prima ; perhaps you will not know them ; but as for yourself, *you* can never alter—papa and mamma will see no difference in you. Ah, *you* have nothing to fear, it is only their daughters from whom they expect so much ; how are they to appear before them, they desire to know !"

Catching the reflection of us accidentally in the opposite mirror, I did not agree with Dolores that no change was to be seen in me ; but I thought I had worn "remarkably well," notwithstanding.

Character had been the prevailing definition of my face in youth, and it remained so still ; but life in increasing its serenity had softened the early fire ; and for Dolores and that sparkling birdie chattering in her brother's arms, I had no anxiety about their presentation to their father or their mother. I could take up conscientiously the playful jesting of Dolores, assuring her that indeed it was my opinion *she* had better not risk the making her appearance. We heard *what dresses* the ladies wore in the "tertulias" in the cities

style of the national dances ; and how the troops were ordered out ; and this last was the point upon which Constantino was most at home. His eyes acquired additional fire, and a shade rose on his colourless cheek, talking of titles and soldiery. I asked if there were no other professions equally attractive to him, and he replied to me much in the same tone that another had once replied to my father, and I was constrained to touch that rebellious wave of hair, falling down on his brow ; and as the action was a little motherly, my unison with his sisters seemed thorough, that most established us with each other ; and he proceeded to claim on the cognomen his sisters had bestowed upon me. I could not see its applicability, since cousins should be of the same size ; "it was not becoming that 'little girls' should call a señora nothing more than 'cousin ;'" and Josephita's head went up at these designations ; on which we followed pithy discussions upon the proprieties due to ; and Dolores declared herself "waiting to hear what they two presumed that Prima must be ?"

A few days were stolen from school for the august sake of my dear brother ; and then, in accordance with my instructions, I made inquiries of my gentlemen acquaintances (for, on several motives, I had allowed Helen to present me to some of her friends) about the schools in London. The University College was recommended to me as being most suited to Constantino, and there he was immediately placed ; adding the day at the college, and returning to me in the evening.

It was a very satisfactory arrangement, leaving me the rest of the whole day, and making a recreation for us all in the hours during which I never wrote. Constantino was passionately fond of music, and delighted with his sisters' proficiency ; he was able to accompany them on the piano with his wind instruments, making a charming concert ; and had brought over with him a number of native songs, in each he was as happy to give lessons, as his sisters were to give them. They were studying the Spanish language together, and the girls were glad to benefit by his pronunciation, and nightly these little songs rang out on their sweet voices. Dolores and Josephita in their turn instructed their brother in the intricacies of Italian ; while

in French and English the three found no difficulty in singing songs with the simplicity which satisfied their three selves and me.

In the season we occasionally attended a theatre, or we indulged in a sight of an exhibition of paintings; but this was the extent of our dissipation; for although my family were precocious, I chose to treat them as became tender years, and, to say the truth, I did not wish my señoritas to be introduced to strangers. Various inconvenient contingencies presented themselves to my mind in conjunction with their being taken into society. I wished to acquit myself, if possible, of their guardianship during the remaining time, as happily as I flattered myself I had done hitherto; but I confess I felt their charge a weighty one, as day by day the *children* were developing into early maidenhood; and we had an ordeal through which to pass, which might naturally arouse my duenna-like faculties, before the coming of the time when I should resign my darlings to their parents.

I was more than usually hard at work, rising an hour earlier than my wont, and zealously husbanding all my quarters of hours, in the second spring Constantino spent in England; for the months which had stolen away imperceptibly were rapidly bringing us to another point in the chart we hoped to work out. It was my intention to leave London that summer, taking my daughters a lengthened tour on the Continent; and I wished to finish the work on which I was engaged before quitting home. That, with a variety of necessary business, made me especially occupied. Constantino was to leave University College, and we were to place him, in the first instance, at a college in Bahrenfeld, Germany, and then proceed on our route. His father had fixed upon this academy, as combining military with other studies desirable to conclude the education of Constantino; it was situated three miles from Hamburg, and had attained a high celebrity. Many South-Americans had been sent there as students. In May I got rid of my *manuscript*, and in the middle of June my young ladies bade *adieu* to school, having made great progress in wisdom, and being considered with justice accomplished as well as *talented*.

Helen very kindly assisted me in various minutiae of taste, or I had been a recluse so long, I could not decide upon niceties in the style of young ladies' pretty things; and I also found myself in contact with an individual standing high in Constantino's opinion, for Constantino had fallen into the habit of choosing garments which his sisters thought less becoming than characteristic, and they enlisted my judgment into the disputed cause.

In a few weeks we achieved wonders; and bringing our reparations to a close, there were placed one night in our all a tolerable number of portmanteaux, &c., being the indisputable signs of a long journey on hand.

Cranston and Kenneth at home for the vacation, and Mary and Helen whom their mother taught, all came over with their parents to spend the last evening before our departure with us. A very pleasant evening it was; I was only a little nervous, because I was averse to changes, and was more than ever now a very responsible person. No cares or anxieties troubled our young ones; they pushed the table aside, and got up some excellent dancing. Their numbers were convenient, allowing a lady to superintend the music, while we three elders enjoyed their civility in excusing our joining their amusement.

These young people had always been excellent friends; but a greater contrast could not exist than between these English and Peruvian families.

There is always so much to be said at the last, that I was forgetting several items which I wished impressed upon one or other; for as we were proposing to be absent a year, there were many dispositions to make. Cranston said no business of mine would be troublesome to him, and Helen agreed to write frequently, and occasionally they were to look in on Mrs. Lines, and console her in our absence, for my humble friend proved as faithful as those of higher rank, and made a great trouble of this parting, as she said it was the forerunner of a second and graver departure.

The Bartons left at an early hour, for we were to embark at seven in the morning, from St. Katherine's docks. Seniors and juveniles were alike affected at shaking each other's hands in a leave-taking of a year.

*I felt sad when my young ones had retired, and I sat r*

few minutes alone in the little room which had witnessed no one day of grief during the three years I had occupied it. It had no imposing name ; I never called it my study, it was just my "little room ;" but it had in it my desk, and the low chair in which I sat to write, and a painting of Lima as seen from the sea, by Barton, and portraits in chalks of the three children of Francisco ; and over the mantelpiece hung a pencil sketch which Dolores had made of our little cottage from the side of the Regent's Park, and to which she had given the name of "The Cottage of Content."

It possessed no memorials to her but of peace and joy ; she always said she should never forget it, and should like to have just such a home for her own. That was a taste in which Josephita did not unite ; she had evidently no intention to accommodate herself to insignificance. But this was a trifling example of the dissimilarity between them ; they were tenderly attached to each other, and their affection perhaps was strengthened by their inability to clash together, less dangerous as it is to have few tastes in common than to trespass upon each other's. Dolores was as proud as her sister, but her pride did not show itself in little things ; she took a fuller and more expansive view of that which came before her than did the gay, brilliant little girl who saw gold in all that glittered.

Both were equally affectionate ; but there was a tenderness about Dolores inexpressibly charming. She was the finer girl of the two, and would be unquestionably the finer woman ; but Josephita was excessively pretty, with a sparkling expression and manner that was irresistibly captivating.

I sat thus in my little room, taking a sort of leave, and feeling that another phase had expired in my life, since I was breaking loose from business, and had awoke to find not children now in those who had been committed to me. One of my reasons for having met a little society from time to time in Tavistock Square, where the Bartons resided, was that I might have legitimately a few introductions on the *Continent*, since I had not been abroad before, and it was *desirable* I should reap all available advantages from such an expensive tour, which I might never have undertaken, *had it not been* for the resolve, framed so long ago, that I

would seek out my father's grave ; and I wished my maidens to have a slight idea of the world, just so much as to add to their appearance, and enhance their introduction at home, not so much as to wear away a breath of their simplicity, and the point would be a nicety.

I was deep in thought when Anne knocked at the door, begging to be admitted ; her eyes bore traces of the way in which she had been conducting herself, and I could sympathize entirely with her.

"I shall not know the house, Miss Cameron, when you're all gone, dear ; it will be so lonesome, I shall have nothing to do."

"Well," I said, laughing a little, "that conveys a tremendous idea of the trouble we have given you. Then you think nothing about the clergyman, and his excellent wife and sister—they give no necessity for attention in comparison with ourselves."

"Ah, you understand me. Well, I can't help feeling, and my husband says so too, that this is nothing after all, your going away this time, and it's that that makes work with me. It's wicked of me to desire, to keep you, after all you've gone through, from the reward you've been hankering after for so many years ; but I shall feel almost as if you were dead, I know ; never having the prospect of seeing you again in this mortal world, and now that I'm so used to you."

"I know, Anne, but never mind ; we'll not talk about that now : man proposes, but God disposes. I never look forward with certainty to anything, as you well know, and we can none of us tell what may happen in the intervening time. I feel very anxious myself to-night, I can assure you, or I am undertaking a great step, but I do feel quite assured that I am not acting imprudently. My brother and his wife are glad that their daughters should travel, and for my part I could not finally leave England, if it be the will of Providence that I should do so, without accomplishing that duty which has been owing for fourteen years. Oh, Anne, when I first heard of my father's being drowned, I thought how I would fly to the spot, and, finding his body, would bring it to England, that both my parents might sleep in the grave in the churchyard at Lynwood. I little thought

how things were. I have been looking back a little to-night, and, Anne, I feel to have been laden with favours. We had our trials, and great trials, but who has experienced much kindness and charity too as I?"

"You always did talk just like a book," said Anne.

"It isn't a particularly clever book then, Anne; I say is, I owe all my comfort, past, present, and future, since I knew you, to you; which you know right well. You need not deny a word; you would not turn me out of your door as you might have done, and as anybody else would have done; and the consequence is, I have struggled through."

"Well, if you're going to talk in that way, the sooner I go to bed the better. As if such an ignorant creature like me had done anything for the like of you!"

"I agree with you, we had better say good-night. You, Anne, make me a thousand times vainer than would all the critics in the world. Now, pray awake in proper time, Anne; I do not think I need go to bed, for there are only about five hours to the time of our breakfast being over and ourselves ready to start."

"I should think," said Anne, as we went upstairs, "I am going to have you wear yourself out in that sort of way with all you've got before you! If Elizabeth was but as old as Miss Dolores, instead of such a whippity-snap, and her father might mind the house, and I'd go along with you myself."

"Well," I said, "Anne, I wish it had happened so; I should have been considerate and married earlier."

"Any way I couldn't be much earlier," said Anne, "I wasn't above nineteen; and it's very bad to settle so soon among poor folks, Miss Cameron—not that it was so much for me, for it made a difference, him being well to do, as it was when he first came after me, or mother would not have heard of it."

"Ah! I always thought you were mercenary."

And Anne put the finishing strokes to the apparel prepared in three distinct chairs in the dressing-room, and returned, as she was quitting the room, to tie a blue veil to Josephita's hat.

The next morning saw us all on board the *Elba*.

Hamburg; and gliding smoothly down the river, I fully shared the intoxication of my young ones; it was so very novel to be seated there, with the flowery banks on either side, and the clear sky above us, in the early day, and the water beneath, when we were no sailors. I, indeed, had never but once before been on board of any vessel, nor had they since their last long voyage to England. Twice we had been down in the country, but we had not stayed at sea-places, for I had so long hoarded my craving, that I would not gratify it by halves.

Moving out into the sea in the course of some hours, we were more delighted still, for as yet no ailments afflicted us, destroying our enjoyment. The huge white waves came dashing beside us as we leaned over the ship's side, and I could have wept with the overpowering sensation of, for the first time, breasting the glorious ocean. From my childhood I had glorified the sea; fastened to an inland abode, I had longed and panted for it. It was the more tempting because it was never approached. Latterly I had suffered myself to anticipate this little voyage, and my ideas were more than realized. It was rather rough this day, which made the waves additionally attractive to Dolores and me; and how far our romanceful temperaments would have carried us, I know not, had I not been recalled to realities anything but romantic, by the sight of two faces near together at a distance, bearing unmistakable signs of discomfort. Notwithstanding Constantino's repeated asseverations that not in the whole course of his long voyage had he been victimized, he was decidedly a victim now, and not a bit of a martyr.

And shortly, with all the grandeur of the German Ocean stretched before our eyes, would it be believed, we were wholly indifferent to the spectacle which a little while before we had unanimously admired with so profound a pathos?

We only partially recovered on entering the mouth of the Elbe; but once more in smoother water, we felt its beneficial effects, and could see how smiling was the country on either side the river; and approaching the city of Hamburg, we were once more alive to the excitement of stepping for the first time on foreign soil. The place did not give me the



idea of its containing one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants, as our geographical statistics informed us that it did, and more. But we were greatly interested in Hamburg, our first continental exploration; we traversed the greater part of the town, visiting the Johanneum or high school, and the site where once stood the ancient church of St. Peter, and we were driven to the surrounding lovely villages; and after a few days' stay, when we were very lavish in our expenditure and lived at the Hôtel de l'Europe (which contains one hundred and eighty apartments), we accompanied Constantino to Bahrenfeld. I found the heads of the college intellectual and agreeable persons; and I felt great confidence in leaving my young relative wholly in their care. We were shown over the house, playgrounds, &c. after which nothing remained but simply to say "farewell." Tears were on the cheeks of my darlings, and the boy's face was white, and I felt sad; but they were born to a world of care, and I must not hope to shield them from it; it has rather been my endeavour to give them a solid foundation of trust, upon which to be able to suffer, than to hide from them the nature and power of grief. We left Hamburg on the 25th of July for Belgium; we reached Antwerp with fewer inconveniences than many preceding travellers record. We had an efficient courier, whom I had engaged in London and who, excepting by appearance, was no stranger to me. He was the brother of Anne's husband, and had lived many years in a gentleman's family accustomed to be much abroad. During the last years of his travelling with them, Baptist had acted as guide, thus becoming thoroughly versed in what was required by us.

A glimpse of the splendid spire of the cathedral was our first intimation of Antwerp; and this specimen of Gothic architecture delighted my eyes. We stood long in front of the painting, Rubens's master-piece, which is there, the "Descent from the Cross;" and carefully examined admiringly the whole famous edifice. We walked along the Place de Meer, and saw the fine paintings in the Town Hall, and the Botanic Gardens, and all else that was worth exploring; and after five days, pleasantly spent, we left Antwerp for Brussels by rail. Here we took up our residence in the Place de la Monnaie, finding apartments with

ing us without any difficulty ; and here, as in our other two rests, we lionized industriously. In the evenings we promenaded the Allée Verte ; and once we walked to the Palace of Lacken, and, in its turn with Notre Dame de la Chapelle, we admired the statue of Godfrey de Bouillon, the cathedral of St. Gudule, and the Hôtel de Ville, in which the Emperor Charles the Fifth resigned his crown. We visited that immortal field, nine miles from Brussels, where the French lilies paled upon those green mounds, now flourishing with the gore beneath them—graves of brave men. We spent several hours about the spot, which is called the plains of Waterloo ; and we stayed at Quatre Bras a little while, and looked back lingeringly, leaving, with regret, that memorable ground.

From Brussels, we proceeded to Rouen, also by rail, and, arrived in that fine old town, I felt more at home ; for, being a city of France, it appeared more familiar to me than those we had just seen.

The cathedral, and the vast church of St. Ouen, containing fine sculpture, were here also great attractions to us. The fine bridges, which unite the opposite banks of the Seine, arrested our attention, and surprised us. But our earliest impressions of Rouen were gathered from St. Catherine's Hill, where we walked on the morning after we arrived, for it had been night when we reached the city. We passed through the market-place towards it, conversing about that fair maiden of Domremy who placed a crown on a king's brows, who did not stoop in a later day to save her from the stake. We considered the amazonian statue did not do her justice, for there was purity about Joan d'Arc, which that flourishing steed and warlike woman do not typify. From Rouen we sped on to Paris.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

"O thou land of the lily, in vain  
Thou strugglest to raise its pale head !  
The faded bud never shall blossom again,  
The violet will bloom in its stead."

It is a beautiful country, studded with pretty towns and villages ; and the train runs along by the Seine.

I had a letter of introduction to some near relatives of friends of Cranston's, acquaintances of my own, and to their house, in the Chaussée d'Antin, Dolores, Josephita, and I were driven on the day after our arrival.

The moment the lively little Frenchwoman, Madame Dessin, read my name upon my card, she hastened to give us the most cordial welcome. She said she was prepared for the pleasure of seeing us, and was quite determined to have the honour of showing her native city to us. She was very decisive in her proffers of friendliness and hospitality ; for she declared it impossible but that we must all stay with her. She would not hear of our occupying the private apartments we had engaged, and which we described to her in high terms ; for I had been surprised to meet with such pleasant rooms, after all I had heard of the inconveniences of a residence in Paris to English people. Madame Dessin assured me her husband would never pardon her if she suffered me to go away ; but I succeeded at last in convincing her that we must retain our independence. I told her I believed we should trespass so much that she would retain no doubt of our amiable dispositions towards her. I knew Madame Dessin before I saw her ; I knew she had a noble and excellent heart under a light and gay exterior ; portions of her conduct had ere now called forth my highest praise. I was glad to be able to make such a friend, in addition to having so charming an acquaintance in Paris.

Her fault was one which we instantly detect—a frivolity which sat upon her, as upon every other Frenchwoman, with fascinating grace.

Our first onset into Parisian sight-seeing was to the Louvre ; in that wonderful gallery, seventeen hundred feet long, filled with magnificent pictures, there is food for the enjoyment of many days ; and we were not niggardly. I have a little better idea of paintings than some people have ; but I longed greatly for Cranston beside me, with whom to discuss these *chefs-d'œuvre* of the old masters.

We set a day apart for the Tuileries, its palace, gardens, and terraces. I was agitated by varied feelings, standing on spots blazing out of history. A short time only had elapsed, at this period, since the downfall of monarchy in France ; and looking upon the Tuileries, I felt that Louis Philippe and his gentle queen, ought to be passing hand-in-hand along these galleries, or among these stately trees. I did not like the idea of the other reign, of the other ruler, at that moment in the Palais d'Elysée. We gazed from the windows upon the triumphal arch, two miles away, over the expanse of the gardens, which convey an idea of so great space ; for the Champs-Élysées behind are apparently one with the Tuileries gardens, viewed from the spot where we stood. We felt the prospect very fine. When we sallied forth without Madame Dessin, we frequently found her awaiting our return ; and she always had some "delightful little idea, promising immense gratification," to unfold for our approval, declaring that she "saw nothing of us, and that Mons. Dessin was in despair."

The first time she would have us meet "a charming little circle of her friends," I felt considerable trepidation, for I did not wish my maidens to imbibe a taste for Parisian society ; but it would have been ridiculous to refuse such a pleasant invitation ; therefore we were to appear.

Josephita was perplexed to arrive at my opinion in the affair of the toilette ; but she expressed herself perfectly satisfied with it, when she saw her reflection in the *cheval glass*, in a white dress, very simply made, with a wreath of corn-flowers upon her head, contrasting unpretendingly, yet with some style, with her dark hair and complexion. I felt a great tenderness of admiration, looking at these young girls arrayed for their first glimpse of what is called "society."

*They acquitted themselves well ; I was satisfied ; I could*

have been absurd and have shed proud tears when I how entirely they were presentable anywhere, and with perfect confidence I could now assure myself that ne Francisco nor their mother could expect more of my darl than the benefit that had accrued from their advantage saw their feet in such waltzes as stole away my thou from those who talked with me; in remembrance I what they felt in novelty; perhaps we were equally impre but their agitation was pleasurable only, mine partoc mixed feelings. I had been in no company where dar was introduced, during the years of my residence in Lon and the gay pretty dresses, and inspiring music, with brilliant chandeliers, and the figures of men of fashion, a stilled echoes; I seemed to see again the floating gra Lucy Raymond, and to feel beside me one who was not t

The Frenchmen hovered round my maidens, and I glad to carry them off earlier than Madame Dessin appro there were the innumerable gallantries which gentle proffer and ladies accept; and, compelled to realize certainly my charges approached to womanhood now, I especially desirous that no one should take the liberty seriously captivated. And they were good—when was it were not good? And we were cloaked, and our carriage called, and Monsieur de Chabannes, with whom I had conversing of literature, a celebrated writer and a agreeable man, escorted us to our domicile. He hand into the house and took his leave, and we retired dire but the young voices rang glibly out for a very long time I was driven to open my door and advise a postpone till the morrow. "*Qu'elle est jolie, cette petite!*" cried Ma Dessin of Josephita when I saw her again; and clasping hands, she prognosticated the carrying off of both in among the people to whom she should introduce them whom, she declared, they would be admired as much as deserved. Madame pronounced it a piece of good fortune which she felt unworthy, that she should have two charming *demoiselles* with whom to delight her friends. we were fairly involved, but not to a great extent. found so much to occupy and interest us in the day-time fatigue crept on in the evenings; and it was pleasant quietly with our embroidery, and talk over what w seen. My children rejoiced that my delight in these

was quite equal to their own ; and Josephita thought it was very astonishing I should never have seen Paris until that time.

"Prima has never been out of England because she would not leave us, you know that, Josephita," Dolores said on one occasion. "Dear," she continued, turning to me, "does papa know all about you?"

"Your papa knows me very well," I replied. And I continued, "How amiable that young lady was with her brother to-day—do you remember, Dolores, as we were entering the Madeleine? I think we may conclude favourably about her disposition, although it is dangerous to hazard an opinion upon so slight an insight."

"Ah, she must have been gentle," said Josephita, "or she would have replied angrily when he spoke so scornfully."

"And he must have respected her," said Dolores, "or he would not, after all, have gone away with her ; I saw her take his arm, and that they walked away together as if they were quite good friends again. Yes, we cannot tell what might have happened had the young girl acted differently ; her brother feeling himself insulted by their doubting his word about the money, it is probable in his passion he might have proceeded from words to blows. As it was, the officer credited her statement, she could bear to be unjustly accused in so good a cause, and finally hers was the victory : she must have walked away a very happy girl. And," went on my musing child, "what a number of opposite feelings were called into play : there was injustice and suspicion on the part of the officer ; and the gentleman, I fear, was malicious, and the young man himself imperious and passionate, we ourselves only eager and curious ; but the young girl, she was good, patient, and gentle, though she was very anxious ; and how slight and delicate she was ; until she heard her brother accused she was quite pale, then a little colour came, and her eyes glittered. I wonder if she will die in a decline."

"Well, my dear Dolores," I said, "I think we have pursued that delineation far enough, we shall be arriving in a labyrinth of difficulties if you do not cease. I will trouble you to ring for lights, we will have some of the old songs ; and I shall be glad to hear the duet which Madame Dessin brought you.."

*We spent six months in Paris, during which time. the*

to our friends, we became well acquainted with it, and a secondary motive for our long stay was quite accomplished—the accent of Dolores and Josephita very greatly improved, which was all that had been required to perfect them in the language; I was also glad to have renewed my partly forgotten acquaintance with the French tongue. I had, however, reaped more important benefits on other more interesting points; for, after our first few weeks in Paris, Madame Dessin, finding the style of society really most agreeable to me was that which left me at liberty to enjoy myself in my own way, kindly ceased to press upon me more particular attentions; and I was delighted to meet at her house a few persons she selected as being especially to my taste; those evenings occurring very frequently, as our departure drew near, were charming and beneficial to me. Among other accomplished Frenchmen, I met constantly Mons. de Chabannes, in whose abilities I revelled; and there were women among the acquaintances of Madame Dessin to whom it was a great compliment to me that she should introduce me. These were not too grave *réunions* for my darlings to enjoy: music was always introduced, and the conversation included the current topics of that gay city; upon politics alone I dared not touch, I could not trust myself to speak of the President—the Emperor that would be. My opinion of him at that time was vague, but it was unfavourable. I did not yield him justice; I did not believe him the man of mind he has proved himself to be. I had an indefinite belief that he was a trespasser on the strength of a famous name. I thought he would never establish a rule embracing the prosperity of France. I thought that a branch of the royal house would be a firmer stay to the nation; and in the heart of that country, in Paris, in France, for the first time I yearned over her interests. I could have stretched out my arms over her fair soil, invoking the benign goddess of Peace and Plenty, to descend once and for aye, with healing on her wings. She lay like some grand creature dabbled in her blood, and I could see no dependence in the future commensurate with her need. I was a sceptic, not of the existence of intellect and genius among her sons, but of a hand to bind together the various wholesome elements, which should render them efficient in a labouring, groaning count

such as then was *la belle France*. I did not sufficiently weigh the steps by which the last crowned head had been expelled from thronedom, by the kicking over of a dinner-table. I forgot the Spanish marriages, and other items France piles up against the memory of her last king; in short, I wished that I had known Paris when it wore a different colouring. Now I recognize undeniably the might of the strong right hand; I see in Louis Napoleon the one man who could bind together the interests of France at that time. He has ridden triumphantly over fields where another rider must have been unhorsed. I have learned that, being the man for France, he is the great man of the world—the exalted of his generation. 'Tis a fierce heart and subtle, and the hand is swift to strike, as the brain is stern to conceive—'tis a man in whose proportions we don't find a conscience; but he has made a great plot, having a great goal before him; and neither eye, nor arm, nor machinery have yet been found wanting, and neither the assassin's bullet or knife has touched his charmed life. I, for one, pray for that, on which hangs the peace of Europe.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

“The chief has fallen, but not by you,  
Vanquishers of Waterloo!”

ACQUAINTANCESHIP with the city of Paris recalled the First Napoleon vividly to my mind. The afflicted man who died at Longwood had been the scourge of Europe,—yea, his ambition had been that of a fallen archangel; but seeing greatness which cannot die, when time has soothed the first indignation we half forget where the darkness lay. It was the conqueror of Austerlitz, of Lodi's Bridge, and of Montenotti, the proscribed by misfortune, the exile with a broken heart, whom I remembered. I heard not the voice which commanded the poison in Egypt, I saw not he who sent the noble Swiss to the gallows, and signed the doom of the innocent Duc d'Enghien. I saw the citizen President in the splendour of his statesmanship. I saw the Emperor of the



nation himself had clothed with victory the imperial purple round him ; and I saw not Josephine.

"Are they French, and do they speak here in those loud tones?" I asked, beneath my breath, of Mons. de Chabannes, upon whose arm I leaned, when, in one visit we made in company with a large party, Napoleon was forcibly recalled. He shrugged his shoulders for answer ; and alone in the crowd shared my sensations.

The fane was not then reared where, in later days, the Majesty of England stood, another crowned head beside her own ; and she, the proudest of a proud race, clasping hands with the house of Corsica, should feel as I then felt, 'mid the swelling tide of a thousand aspirations evoked by the mighty dead of France—the mighty, mighty dead.

Again and again I wished, solemnified as I was, that I had gone there individually alone, for the throng around do not annoy like those comprising your party, who are privileged to address you. Mons. de Chabannes entered into conversation with one of the veteran soldiers, that I might hear Napoleon's name on the lips of one who would speak it more thrillingly than I might ever hear it again.

We had spent a few quiet days, not seeing Madame Dessin, not making excursions ; walking a little on the Boulevards, enjoying ourselves alone, when, as we were sitting late over our coffee, Madame Dessin ran into the room :—

"*Ma chère amie, ma belle amie, que tu es charmante ! tout le monde le dit !*" And rushing into the most vehement panegyrics, she declared "she was not in the least surprised ; she had predicted it from the first. Mons. Dessin was enraptured, she was ravished," &c., &c. My forbearance was presently well nigh expended. I was able to gather from united ejaculations that Madame Dessin had made the discovery that Mons. de Chabannes was in love with me. I gravely assured my friend that I was not in the habit of evoking such sentiments ; that I was so completely hemmed in by various interests inconsistent with matrimonial prospects for myself, that it was not in the order of things that the compliment of which she spoke could be intended for me ; nor could the attentions I received from Mons. de Chabannes, in common with other gentlemen, bear a moment's consideration in so very serious a light. But

Madame Dessin laughed, chattered, and declared it to be a settled thing ; and Dolores and Josephita felt redoubled interest as they perceived that my tranquil reasoning in no way subdued the French lady's opinion, who ran off at length inquiring whether she might send me powdered tresses, since she believed I considered my own grey ; and seriously assured me, passing out at the door, " that every evening Mons. de Chabannes presented himself at her house, watching eagerly for my entrance ; and as each night I failed to appear, her charming friend Madame de S—— invariably said to her, that Mons. de Chabannes desired to marry the English friend of Madame Dessin,—pity that English ladies were so hard to be won ! " " I congratulate you, *ma chère amie*, so does Mons. Dessin ; we shall have you residing near us. Mons. de Chabannes is rich too,—it will be an excellent establishment for your wards. The last papers of Mons. de Chabannes created an immense sensation ; he is a wonderful man, and having you for a wife, I know not what he may become.

Seeing Mons. and Madame Dessin again on the morrow after this conversation, and they again adverting to this topic, by which they were much elated, I took the opportunity to request that we might speak of it no more, since such speculative conclusions were not warranted by my cold notions. My friends reluctantly submitted to compliment me no more on this subject, nor Mons. de Chabannes either, as they confessed to be their habit each day in my absence ; and Madame went away shaking her head, and pronouncing that she did not comprehend me at all. But she was in the right, and so was her amiable husband, and so was their piquant friend ; for a few days later Mons. de Chabannes presented himself, and briefly made me a formal proposal of marriage. I was very much surprised, and very much flattered. This French gentleman was perhaps fifty years of age, possessing an appearance exceedingly agreeable, and literary abilities of the highest order. Truly, as Madame had said, he had a great reputation. I never encouraged him to speak with me upon political subjects ; but I read his works, and was aware of the position he held, *and the importance attached to his coincidence in the political movements of that day.*

I was at this time in my thirty-seventh year, and therefore it was not personal gifts which attracted Mons. de Chabannes. It was a homage offered to intellectual endowment which I received from this distinguished Frenchman ; and to a woman of my temperament the knowledge of this was an effective means to its consideration.

But I did not allow the tempting perspective of association with the literati of Paris, and a high place in those circles, to weigh with me against the decision of years.

With a thorough appreciation of its worth and honour, and a sincere regret to oppose his wishes, I declined the hand of Mons. de Chabannes ; and had you been present when I announced to Dolores and Josephita that Mons. de Chabannes had certainly proposed to marry me, you would not have been surprised that I felt no regret at the decision to which I had come. They knew little of its importance in hearing of such a proffered marriage ; but Josephita said she wondered, "since Mons. de Chabannes was a delightful man, that I did not wish to reside with him, and be the mistress of a fine hotel, and have numbers of servants and carriages, and give entertainments myself." Dolores thought I should look very well there, and would make a very nice married lady ; but she could never live always in Peru with her own papa and mamma, while I was living in Paris. It would involve great trouble to somebody, somebody must be terribly grieved ; but would it not be better for myself to have a distinguished husband ? was I sure I preferred to refuse Mons. de Chabannes ?

Before we left Paris I had been so fortunate as to convert an unacceptable suitor into a very acceptable friend. We met several times afterwards at the house of Madame Dessin, and I was more sensible at each meeting, that this, the offering to my meridian days, was a lofty one. The possession of a friend of his standing was fraught with pleasure, and a great honour to myself. I rode once with him in the Champs Elysées. It is unusual for Frenchwomen to ride ; but there is always here and there an Englishwoman to be seen on horseback in the fashionable hours, therefore we were not conspicuous.

I had never ridden with Mr. Russell, and it had been some years before my acquaintance with him, that I had

last been on horseback. I recalled the occasion distinctly, for it was during my last week at Lynwood ; Edward had come over to breakfast with us, and to accompany me, for I had declared the previous evening that, a week having elapsed and I had not scoured the country, I should forget how to mount a horse. Truly the space between that day and this would have excused forgetfulness ; but I felt at home again, in my saddle, and the thorough-bred horse of Mons. de Chabannes, fresh from my country, carried me proudly along. It was a splendid day,—my companion was quite to my taste, elegant and gifted ; both of us, I am sure, enjoyed the purest pleasure.

After the morning on which Mons. de Chabannes declared his sentiments towards me, and I explained mine, that subject was never renewed between us ; it had been a passage which was necessary to our present state of friendship, for without it we could not have been upon the unembarrassed terms which were natural to each of us afterwards.

With the young it is equally impossible as unwise to attempt the building of a friendship upon the ashes of a love, but with us the case was different. When in after-years I had no correspondent of the order of Mons. de Chabannes, and while he was pleased to value the letters which I addressed to him, I knew how fortunate was my *rencontre* with a person like himself. How I should have required such a truthful informant ! not only as an elegant friend from whose views, in my comparatively secluded sphere, I derived the greatest pleasure,—but one whose depths of reasoning and observation were an immense strength to my mind ; as well as putting me into possession of intricacies which a woman in my circumstances, except by some such agency, was entirely precluded from learning. We extended our ride, for the weather was inviting ; escaping the crowded streets, we rode a few miles into the country, and reining in our horses, with the breeze blowing fresh upon us (it was now December, but the air was most genial), Mons. de Chabannes bent his head to listen as our horses stepped beside each other, and I told him the history of my first work : how poverty cut me off from the recognized means of publishing—how I was well-nigh crushed with the diff-

culties that surrounded me—and very gravely and earnestly he heard me, glancing from time to time to read the countenance of this woman whom he respected, and who had attained her present position at her own hands alone. I did not omit the original rank of my family, and the misfortune simply which overwhelmed me with pecuniary ruin.

And I spoke more openly to him than I had ever done to any one else of my belief and interest in the futurity of Peru. I entered copiously with Mons. de Chabannes upon the elements which I believed to exist in that country ; for I wanted to get at his combined knowledge and opinions. It was very valuable to me to learn from lips able to estimate, of what hitherto I knew only from one so deeply imbedded in his work that hopes and wishes necessarily influenced every conviction.

And Mons. de Chabannes predicted for myself a more brilliant future than any I had dreamed of. He awoke the ambition within me which had lain long still, for I had experienced the subduing effects of a calm after a great struggle ; and perhaps it had happily been thus. I had not been circumstanced to command any great success,—bound to a course of life which did not permit me advantages absolutely requisite to make my pen a more potent instrument.

Now, when I heard myself encouraged, requested, advised, to do such and such things,—which I felt to be within my compass ; when I was reminded how much I had derived necessarily from change of scene and society ; when my eyes were directed by the finger of genius to a pinnacle aloft,—the hot blood coursed about my heart. And with the air of those smiling lands, and the voice of that proud Parisian, my spirit rocked to and fro, and I gasped after a fame more exalted than any I had known before. I believed the clear accents of his reasoning which placed it already in my grasp ; and I repassed the barriers of Paris with a head more erect, and a firmer seat in my saddle than when I rode forth.

The other subject was touched upon, and postponed for another opportunity, and I was lifted to the ground, and ran up the staircase to my apartments, feeling that another phase in my life was germinated, and that never had any

inclined admirer acted so noble and generous a part as that high-hearted man, to whom I entirely attribute the marked success which hung upon the steps of my friendship for him. That night I took pen in hand, after long flinching, and sketched the opening chapters of a work such as had that day been portrayed to me, and which I felt myself vividly conceiving.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

"Visions of immortality that show  
The longing of the mind for something more  
Than mortal being!—the deep wish to know  
The things of other worlds."

A WEEK before we left Paris, Dolores and Josephita received a visit from Madame Dessin, who, saying that she did not all upon me, that in fact she was unhappily insensible of my presence, addressed herself to my young ones. She drew them away to the further side of the room, and next I heard exclamations of admiration together with thanks upon their parts, with a laughing running commentary on hers, and Madame Dessin vanished, carrying out her play by not once glancing towards my table. She had presented Dolores with an elegant bracelet containing amidst precious stones a fanciful engraving of French mottoes, a most *recherché* ornament, and having a braid of her hair beneath the clasp. It was a lovely jewel, and I thought Madame Dessin wise to evade my acknowledgments, for it was a very costly present with which to associate herself in the remembrance of Dolores. And round the neck of Josephita was fastened a gold necklet, of beautiful workmanship, with a small cross attached to it of emeralds and pearls. These were the most magnificent gifts the Señoritas had yet received, and they were delighted with them, as also was I. We had not ceased to admire them when Mons. de Chabannes was announced. Josephita was of our party, his most palpably intimate friend;—he was accustomed, and he did it now, to take her hand and coax her towards him, with a kind *terral* manner, and she had a petting way of treating

him, she was not at all afraid of him ; Dolores I fancy was. And my little birdie was in the habit of making him gay instead of grave, as she herself expressed it. She now made a sally which I put aside by reminding her that early morning was the time for sense, wisdom, and knowledge, and that it was incumbent upon her to produce them at that period in the twenty-four hours ; since the faculties were fresh from repose, and undistracted as yet externally. But Josephita said, "There were exceptions to every rule, and that upon this particular day Mons. de Chabannes could not be permitted to be a great man ; he must be content to amuse two very simple young ladies and one very learned lady, who required a valve for her overwrought intellect, which his pleasantries would precisely afford, and we must none of us at that time be enriched by his well-known powers."

Everybody laughed at this droll enunciation of the Señorita Josephita, and I desired that she would please to omit me from her sum total ; at which she said it would in that case be too tame a dish, the very most uninteresting in the world, and she appealed to her gentleman friend to unite in her sentiments. Mons. de Chabannes replied "that he came upon an affair most grave, as every one present would say when they had heard it named ; and that he would have the honour to explain himself to the Señorita Josephita, who being elected queen and arbitress, should she agree to accomplish the petition which he came to prefer, he should remain ever after a debtor to that young lady's benevolence."

"But ——" said Josephita.

"But me no buts," said he (and I fell back to the chestnut-tree walk, with the crowd around, and the stone weight at my heart, in the midst of which in reply to my doubts, Cranston Barton had said to me, "But me no buts, fair lady," with a swift, brave policy, which gave strength to my own wavering hopes). The end of it was that Mons. de Chabannes requested, and I never thought of refusing, that I would give a few sittings to an artist for a portrait of myself.

"And, pardon me," he said, "ladies are pre-eminent at the taste of the toilette, but I have a weakness, one of a thou-

sand weaknesses. I admire the crimson robe in which I first saw you; it is classic, and becomes your style; will you wear that and the hair as it now is, and your hand having those rings upon it; there is one, I observe, which is never absent, others vanish or change places, but the turquoise remains upon the same finger."

I drove round for Madame Dessin that day, and together we took the studio of Garcia by storm, informing the painter of the emergency in which we found ourselves placed; but notwithstanding the proverbial chivalry of his nation, I doubt not our appeal would have been in vain, had we not been provided with the card of one of his private friends, which acted like a talisman, smoothing our difficulties. We were permitted, doubtless also upon the strength of that name, to look at the large picture on the easel, which the painter was engaged upon.

It was a Spanish subject, a company of troops along a defile, in the scenery of northern Spain, with mountains on the right whose summits approached the sky, a roaring cataract beneath, and beyond a fortress with the royal standard waving over it, to which the military were swiftly and glitteringly wending. The picture made a great noise in London as the finest picture of a living artist, after Murillo.

The gorgeous picture was displaced, and I seated myself, remembering the wishes of the gentleman for whom the portrait was designed, and there appeared very rapidly strokes and colourings which would meet those wishes. It could only be a slight portrait, time being imperious; but one saw at a glance it was a sketch by a master hand. I gave three sittings only, to grant which, I confess, amidst the complications of our getting away, after having been so thoroughly established, great efforts were necessary. Madame Dessin accompanied me to make a first and last visit to the hotel of Mons. de Chabannes. He stood without to receive us as our carriage passed through the gates, and he walked very reverently by my side, through the halls and galleries he had offered for my home, oblivious of the exaltation which my marriage with him would have given me. Passing through an elegant reception-room, so elegant indeed, anywhere but in Paris, for a house in



which no lady presided, and where Madame Dessin complacently seated herself, Mons. de Chabannes conducted me to a small apartment at a distance. It was an exceedingly lofty room, and the windows, which filled all the space on one side, were thrown open, admitting the breeze. An escrutoire stood in one corner, and there was a table in the centre of the room, and one large and inviting chair, beside which there were only two others. Books, papers, and parchments lay upon the table, and a decanter containing water. There was no picture (this had been a sanctum of the brain, not dedicated to indulgence), excepting the oil portrait for which I had sat to Garcia. It was framed chastely, and as, at his request, I seated myself, it looked, from the large chair in which I leant back, a not unsuitable portrait for the spot where it was placed.

Standing near me, Mons. de Chabannes turned from time to time from the portrait to the original, comparing the two ; and the conclusion was, I doubt not, satisfactory to him as to myself. This was an apartment to which strangers had no access ; nor, indeed, he told me, any but himself, and an old privileged valet. But had it been open to the world, and would men and women be passing and repassing over the threshold which I had crossed who would never cross it more, they would have seen in it nothing but a broad expanse of brow, telling of brain beneath. The lashes of the eyes were so long that the eyes themselves should have been romantic ; but they gazed out with a clear light, fearless and brave, with no thrill of sentiment in them ; and the lips, which were not ill-shapen, embodied no idea of love. Truly it was not the portrait which was to have glanced down from the walls of Woburn ; it was colder and more real than many a mere woman. It was the face of authorship on which I looked, whatever Mons. de Chabannes might see. And the glittering gold around it was the future which he had foretold me. This thought recalled me from the long reverie in which we had both been wrapped, and caused me to say to him, "Believe me, there is no prouder spot where I would leave my remembrance, *than in this apartment, whence are emanating thoughts so grand that I am unable to follow their splendid track. I consider it a great honour that my portrait hangs here!*"

"It is an honour to *me* that it remains *here*," said the French gentleman, laying his hand upon his heart. And I asked him a few deep questions, which my ambition for another prompted; and I listened alone for a brief space, that once in my life, to the outpouring anthems of a patriot soul, gasping and part-shackled; and, the whole tenement of my mind upstirred, I felt, admitted to these soul-secrets, that however deeply I had loved Mr. Russell, however undying his memory was, with all his personal glory, all his charm to my heart, the *one, one man* whom then or now, or ever, evermore, I could have made my husband, I had not revered—because no tablet rose, inviting such a reverence, as that which drew the sympathy of my mind to unison with one who, destined at no distant day to destroy a cabinet and mould a throne, had stooped to offer his hand to me, as a woman who, to his kindliness, wore the aspect of a person in whom his honour could rely, and on whom he believed he should not blush to bestow the name of wife.

Passing from that room with a slow step, he holding wide the entrance-door, I took up a card which lay upon the threshold, and, unobserved by him, I carried it away. It was but a card with a name upon it—that of Alphonse de Chabannes; but it would suffice for a record of that day, and be a tiny, tangible memorial of the noble gentleman of France who, from my suitor, became my friend.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

"No name to bid us know who rests below,  
No word of death or birth; only the grasses wave  
Over a mound of earth, over a nameless grave.  
No matter—limes have made as cool a shade,  
And lingering breezes pass as tenderly and slow,  
As if beneath the grass a monarch slept below."

THE last week in December we left Paris;—we left it with much regret. We had spent six months in circumstances of peculiar pleasure; we had met with very much kindness, and entirely from strangers. My heart warmed more than ever towards the Parisian people. Monsieur and Madame Dessin declared they could not pardon one part of my conduct;

but as that declaration in no way affected their real sentiments towards me, I was not uncomfortable. We stayed at no place until we reached Lyons, where I had a desire to spend some days, which we accordingly did. Passing through the fertile territory, with its lovely landscapes and vineries, we lived again through the struggling throes of this kingdom of old, jeopardized by internal foes ; the claims of whose foreign ones were decided, when Mary, the daughter of Charles the Bold, bestowed herself, with her princely possessions, on her maiden choice, the Archduke Maximilian ; and Burgundy, with all her wealth, and the beauty and goodness of her ruler, passed away, to swell another kingdom, to be but a fiefdom of Austria.

The waters of the Rhone and the Saône mingle at the second city of France ; the one departing to be engulfed in the blue Mediterranean, the other bearing Swiss breezes upon its current. We bought silk dresses here, in order to say in Lima, "These robes are of Lyons !" We diverged to the east, calling in question the talents of Baptista, and entered the Sardinian dominions—Sardinia, which was to take so honourable a part in the coming struggle in Europe.

Availing myself of an introduction given to me by Monsieur de Chabannes, we were received flatteringly by several families in Turin, and, at the request of a Sardinian lady with whom I was much pleased, I was presented by her to Victor Emanuel. The daughters of Francisco de la Vega were presented to his majesty also. He has a very intelligent face, the features of which are decidedly Italian. Ours was a private reception ; and I am very proud to have exchanged words with so wise and chivalrous a prince. Yes, Victor Emanuel is a hero-king, and the queen of Great Britain worthily marked her friendship for him and his country, by rising from her bed at an unconscionable hour to present to him, her departing guest, a cup of coffee with her royal hand ;—but that had not happened then. We saw also the duke of Genoa, whose dark, glittering eyes and splendid complexion told me, so long ago, the secret that an early grave was waiting him. We journeyed from Turin to Genoa ; and the palaces of Genoa *la superba*, and the poetry of statuary there, moved me less than the

first-viewed glory of the Mediterranean. We chose from among profusion a little statuette for Mrs. Barton's drawing-room, and Dolores bought an elegant brooch, of mosaic workmanship—subject, the Doves at a Fountain—which she stored in a very secure receptacle to perform a longer voyage. We embarked at Genoa to reach Leghorn by sea, and we were not ill on this voyage, and were literally enchanted. The still loveliness of the sea was indescribable, the Italian sun setting over the water with tints which dazzled our eyes. The seamen chanted their even-song, and Italian children played on the deck, and Italian faces were all around; a grim smile on a man's thin lips, a flash in the glorious eyes of a girl; and I felt how unlike to all the rest was my cold northern bearing. The maidens sitting on my right and left were more in unison with the radiance, being daughters of a southern clime. But I sat at ease—if I was cold, I did not envy,—at ease in gratitude, not pride. I felt the magic charm of Italy in every perfumed breeze; but Italy, priest-ridden Italy, I envied not her natural glory, I wished I could make her free. We cast anchor in the port of Leghorn, and we passed two days in that town, visiting the Melora tower, and the citadel and old castle, &c., and departed for Florence, where I intended to stay two or three weeks.

It was now the end of January, and the weather was delightful. The Arno was one of my dream-rivers when I was a child, and within the sound of its gurgling, and surrounded by vivid associations, I was very happy in ideas in Florence. We were so fortunate as to meet with a villa, in part of which we arranged to reside during our short stay. It was very near the convent, the bells of which fell so sweetly on our ears, that had I not taken my maidens to see one of their services, we might ever after have associated only melody with the remembrance of those convent bells; but in presence of all that imagery, and witnessing a life-long sacrifice (for a young Venetian lady assumed the black veil that day—we saw her decked as for her bridal, and we saw her in her coffin), I was able, more strictly than before, to impress upon these young minds the evils of that system, *among which they were likely to be intimately thrown, and which I had perpetually denounced to them during the year*

of my guardianship, though I did not know how far Maria would approve a point of teaching to which she did not subscribe. But this was a topic to which none of our letters on either side had alluded.

As I beheld the sable robes of the falsely styled bride of heaven, I shuddered at the thought that the young love of Francisco had alone rescued the mother of his children from the like awful fate. We mingled in the crowd as strangers, as I had no wish that the eyes of abbess or priest should rest too scrutinizingly upon my dark-eyed maidens; for they could not be mistaken for my children; I was considered when young to have had a Spanish cast of countenance, but had grown undeniably English.

We omitted Venice,—there she lay on the west. But I wished not to visit Venice,—I desired not to glide in gondolas over shining streams, by the stairs of *palazzi*, through the balmy air, beneath the sunny skies where my ghost had been before.

The grand city of Rome, with its noble ruins, triumphal arches, and superb buildings; its paintings, its statues, and the historic grandeur of past ages in them all—Rome equalled my expectations. I had to remember the creeping foot of a pale desolation, which, rising about its meridian glory, rests not in this our day; I had to recall what Rome was once, before I could be satisfied with what she is. But fallen, she is so grand still; I *was* satisfied. I found what *had* been the mistress of the world.

A large packet of letters was lying for us at Rome—West-coast letters, and one from Anne; it was astonishing how well Mrs. Lines wrote. They were delighted in Lima with our letters; and Anne wanted to know if she might prepare our rooms for the beginning of May. Elizabeth had got a prize for sewing—and the clergyman and his family were leaving their rooms—but she had let them afresh, to three maiden ladies. She desired Miss Josephita might be told that the canary settled pretty well as yet, but Anne doubted his continuing resigned if his mistress were away much longer.

We remained in Rome two weeks only; visiting, among other classic spots, the house in which Angelica Kauffman had been accustomed to paint, before her ill-starred visit of triumph to England. We saw enough of *code-*

siastical processions, and we did not attempt to kiss his Holiness's toe, but we met Pio Nono's carriage with him in it, in a slight crush one day, when we scrutinized him to better purpose than at the altar of St. Peter's. I did not avail myself of some introductions I possessed to Roman families; and I was very industrious with my pen. Shame had it not been so.

My adopted daughters, though ever in my sight, startled me daily by their womanlike manner; they sang nightly more charmingly, and we enjoyed to our hearts' content our numerous indulgences; and John Lines, as I sometimes called him—which term he always made bold to correct—spared me untold inconvenience. Indeed, without him, and him only, I know not how we should have progressed; and one morning at daybreak, as ours was not a prescribed route, authorized by more important tourists, but eccentric in many respects, for we traversed no more of the Italian Campagna, nor the States of the Church, and indifferently omitted Naples, we embarked in a small vessel for the island of Corsica.

And on Corsica we stole some blades of grass, which grew near Napoleon Buonaparte's birth-spot; and in the wildest imaginable defile, with the bright sky above us, and the blue waves at our feet, we read again the story of the famed white hen, which roused such terrible passions in the fierce men of Corsica, and drenched their generations with blood.

From Ajaccio we took shipping for Barcelona, and there we found many letters;—letters from Helen, letters from the West coast, letters from Constantino, and one from Monsieur de Chabannes.

Spain—Spain stirred a new tide within me. The squares and public buildings of Barcelona are good, only a little crowded. We hove into the harbour, leaving a large ship beyond, which we passed with pardonable coquetry, surcharged by her own proportions; her stateliness incapable of following where our insignificance led. (How I recollected reading in the *Times* the bombardment of Barcelona by orders of the regent Espartero!) The whole province of Catalonia abounds with forests, and its fruit-trees are justly famed; with vineries, corn-fields, marble-quarries, and the mines, Catalonia is rich.

We quitted Barcelona in the middle of April,—the weather was very hot, and travelling through Saragossa, we spent two nights there ;—Saragossa, which resisted Napoleon's strength by her heroic defence, in 1809. Multitudes of pilgrims thronged the cathedral. We went over the university.

I was more feverish every day with excitement, and eagerness, and dread now ; yet why the eagerness, why the dread, I scarcely knew ; for my father was dead—it was but his tomb I sought.

The wealth of nature in those fertile provinces of Arragon and Biscay was lost upon me, as I drew nearer—did I not draw near ?—the place of my father's sepulture.

Graven upon my memory (and I also possessed the journals) were all the notes of the catastrophe. The *Southern Belle* had been driven back upon the northern coast of Spain, and it was a few miles west of Bilbao where she had struck on the rocks, and where the dead bodies of the drowned had been washed, and where, if anywhere, I should find what I sought. My darlings knew the history—how my father had been drowned, and that it was here ; and their faces were white as mine, as, with Baptista, we walked forth down to the shore, on the evening of our arrival.

A number of persons, ladies and gentlemen, and others whom those orders did not embrace, were walking on the smooth path above us ; the costumes of these latter were more remarkable and picturesque than any we had seen before. But we trod on the shingle ; Dolores' arm was fast locked in mine—I fancied the voice of the sea was a moan, as we suffered it to reach our feet. I wanted to stretch out my arms with a bitter cry of anguish. This then was the remorseless water which robbed me pitilessly of my father's life—this was the spot near which, so long ago, I had been made an orphan.

The French tongue, which had hitherto availed us, was of no use now ; the natives of the city of Bilbao speak the Provençal dialect ; and the seamen of ports have a language, in all places, of their own.

By my direction Baptista entered into conversation with the men we found on the beach ;—the seamen of Bilbao are famous as the finest seamen in Spain.

I did not expect much intelligence here ; but I wished to ascertain the precise spot where the ship went down ; and relying on the unfailing memory of this class, I felt sure of being set at rest on that point at once, and on the morrow we would follow the track.

Baptista spoke with one and another, and they gathered together in little knots, and eyed us curiously, and questioned Baptista, and then talked again among themselves, and, finally, more than one remembered distinctly the wreck of the English vessel from Madeira, eight miles west of Bilbao, some fifteen years ago.

Baptista repeating all he gleaned, I said it was sufficient ; the seamen knew that all souls went down ; but when they heard it, they none of them remembered the ship's English name.

We were all indisposed to turn back into the town ; but a heavy shower of rain coming on, sent us half-drenched to our inn. It was not the most comfortable in the world ; but we had closed our eyes to many creature discomforts in the course of a tour which had delighted us ; and at Bilbao I was too full of painful thoughts to be annoyed by what travellers expect to encounter.

The next morning, hiring mules and a native guide, besides Baptista, we set out for the indicated spot. We were told we should find no habitation on the way but a clump of fishers' huts, these being two miles on this side the point where the wreck had been. We wound along a beautiful track, overhanging the sea, with flowering shrubs on our left hand,—a wild, strange path, suiting the stranger-woman and her mission, whose whole heart was gloomy. We came in sight presently of the fish-people's huts, as they had been described to us, and we all dismounted, and Baptista and I made our way into one of them. The woman within looked as much aghast as if we had been evil spirits, so marvellous was it that we should break in upon her. Baptista could barely understand her speech, the tone was so extraordinary ; but she comprehended him, and fixing her large black eyes upon me, and crossing herself, she told how all had happened in that awful storm ; and the Bilbao guide taking up her words, repeated them in Baptista's ear, and Baptista in turn related in English what the woman



said ; and I sat down upon the floor, for there was no seat at hand, and nerved myself to hear from a spectatress the tale of the fatal shipwreck.

This gaunt woman, of my own age, was just married then, and she and Pedro lived in this hut and he brought up his boat in haste one night in December, and she dried his garments, for they were saturated, and so were theirs who were with him ; and the blackness in the sky increased, and made her tremble, and the wind was tearing across the sea by midnight : she and Pedro could not sleep for the roar of the water. Then they heard signals from a ship in distress, and they went out in the hurricane, and made a pile, which they set fire to, in order that, if the vessel could right herself, she might escape the rocks—any way, a light was a beacon ; they scarce knew what they did, but they were willing to save life ; but the wind took the fragments of firewood, and scattered them far ahead ; and the men and women in the other huts came out too, and the guns sounded clearer every boom, and there was a shorter space between each report ; and they heard another gun fired from an opposite direction, but nothing could be done by them, though they knew she was close on shore ; and then there was a crash in the darkness and the wind, and when daylight came, from higher up on the coast the spars and planks came floating, when they went to search, but no ship was to be seen. The bodies were washed on shore, telling their own tale,—and there were casks of spirits, and chests,—and the things in them brought gold ; therefore it was a good time for the fish-people of Peon,—they had never seen such a wreck ; and the men carrying things down to Bilbao, and the women returning from the fish-market, brought news that she was an English ship ; for the other vessel, whose guns they had heard, weathered the gale, and put into Bilbao ; and the whole town of Bilbao came along to Peon, as they called their cluster of houses ; and for years there had been talk of that awful gale, when the British vessel was wrecked ; after which their young men could buy themselves boats, and business had begun to flourish in Peon. “ Ask her more, Baptista ; ask her about the bodies of the drowned ! ”

And in course it came round to me thus ;—“ she and Pedro helped to dig the grave where they buried them ”—I had seen

Baptista turn pale,—“but they were buried reverently” (again crossing herself).

“And were all laid together?”

“No, not all. There was a woman’s body with fine clothes upon it—a young woman’s it was; and a quarter of a mile off where it came up, an infant’s body was washed—and Pedro dug a grave for those two by themselves, saying they might be mother and child.”

“And were no others laid alone?”

“No other was laid alone,” she said.

I rose up and put some coin in her hand, and bade Baptista desire the woman to show me where were the graves; and she walked forth with her red gown clinging tightly round her, and the head-gear of her class and the fishwomen’s shoes (I behold that woman now); she took her way along the shore by the same wild path we had followed thus far, we behind on our mules. After a time, there were a number of little crosses to be seen in the distance, placed on a rising ground; and the brawny fingers made signs again, and I knew that, unless the deep held them, I was in presence of my father’s remains. The breeze sweeping over the hills bowed the heads of the tiny flowers, and bent the blades of the ferns, and I felt it mockingly on my face; for the flowers and the ferns kept guard beneath, where my father was sleeping; and I might ride over his bed, but I could not touch his pillow. *They* were indigenous there, but his daughter’s foot might not linger about the place of his tomb. I knelt down, and they who were with me drew back, and I passed again through the vast grief of my orphanage; but when I was exhausted with weeping, soft arms twined round my neck, and tears from young eyes drenched my hands, and I must rise and depart,—for the earth held those for whom I must live. And Dolores gathered, by their clinging roots, some of the blooming flowers, and carried them, soil and all, carefully in her arms. I mounted my mule and gazed back on the flowery knoll till it could be no more seen, and the pilgrimage vowed for sixteen years was over.

Retracing her way, the fishwoman poured into the ears of Baptista a tale of her woes. Plenty, she said, had not removed ill luck; she had smart gear, but her door had nothing but corpses inside it; she was a lone woman now

Glancing over her shoulder at me and the maidens on either side of me, she said that she had suffered more than I. Pedro ran a cargo for Bilbao, and whether she was overladen or struck with evil the fish-wife knew not, but the boat went down; and he who was alone in her, though he could swim, was lost; and she carried his body in her arms from where it was washed ashore, to the hut where there were but babes now. And she buried him—but not by Peon; Pedro might rest in holier ground—he lay in the consecrated earth in Bilbao. And when her sons were nine and twelve years old—(she had no more than two)—José was helping to unlade a boat on the shingle at Bilbao, and his foot slipped and he fell, injuring the bone of his back; and writhing in agony for three months, he died in tortures;—they suffered him to carry too heavy a weight for his strength.

Then she had only Miguel, her beautiful eldest boy, who got learning from the ship's companies, and was to have been a scholar, and have gone to the college at Leon (which town was four times the size of Bilbao), and who had such a fine voice that Father Juan had said he should sing among the boys at the cathedral there. They called her out of her bed at night, when she thought he was safe with Father Juan, and she put back the loop in the door to see what company the midnight had brought her; and there she saw Miguel, in the moonlight, with his arms hanging down, and his hair lank; and she knew by the look of him she had no more left now. When she took him in her arms, and carried him across to her bed, they told her the fierce lightning had struck him, several hours before; they were Peon lads coming up from the town, and had found Miguel laid across the path; and finding him, they brought him home. Baptista repeated her story to me, and I knew she had suffered more than I.

The rest of our way we went silently, I revolving how mercy had surpassed judgment throughout my lot. I was satisfied, even in this sad day; for had I found a single grave, I should not have disturbed its serenity; I should not have enacted the wild dream which once prompted me to lay my *dead side* by side at Lynwood. No, no,—it were desecration to touch; so from that fair and teeming soil, warmed by the skies of Spain, and washed by the foam of the Bay of

Biscay—and from the still shade of the beech-tree, in the English churchyard, they two shall rise to be united in the air.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

“The kind old friendly feelings !  
Oh, seem they e'er less dear,  
Because some recollections  
May meet us with a tear !”

It was painful to me to remain in Bilbao—we quitted it immediately. Baptista visited the fish-huts of Peon again on the following morning ; and bearing another remembrance from me, I bid him tell the childless widow I should never forget her great troubles, and that hearing about them had done me good, and that I gratefully thanked her for assisting to bury the drowned.

He brought me word back that “she should never see a wreck, nor a woman mourning for her father, but she should think of me. And she committed me to Mary—the blessed Mary.” Poor thing !

I could not have trusted my darlings on that water for all the world ; therefore we left Bilbao by land, and travelled to Leon.

We heard the choir in the cathedral, among whom Miguel was to have chanted, and beheld that and other sights ; but I was less easily pleased now, I was sighing for a home breeze ; I had achieved that for which paramountly I left England.

From Leon we undertook a wild route. In our lodging in Leon was a family of French people,—father, mother, five daughters, and three or four servants ; they, like ourselves, had chalked out a desultory track ; and dining at the same table, in the course of conversation I ascertained they were going across the country to Oviedo, trusting to fall in with some vessel touching on the coast, by which they could embark for a French port. Consulting with Baptista, I thought we would propose giving them our company, an offer which they said they were delighted to accept. Consequently we united our numbers, forming a goodly party, *hired guides, and set out ; sometimes in carriages, sometimes*

on mules, pushing on with prudent haste, we traversed the country from Leon to Oviedo, in the principal Asturias; and now I was longing to quit Spain, I tyrannical eagerness to fling her soil from off my feet.

We had not been three days at Oviedo before we received intelligence that a Portuguese vessel from Oporto lay at Noria, a small village upon the coast. We risked the risk of getting on board of her, and hastily gathering together our luggage, we made for Noria. Baptista went on the *Maria Stella*, and brought us news that she was a private vessel, bound specially for London, hovering on the coast, he suspected, for some detained advices. The captain was willing, for a consideration, to receive passengers in the vessel; he sent off a boat, into which ourselves and our luggage were hastily handed, and bending to their oars, the Portuguese sailors rowed us alongside the *Maria Stella* in a very short time; and we were *en route* for England! we were then

The Portuguese captain had agreed to put our acquaintances, Monsieur and Madame Duplessis and family, on board at Brest. With some difficulty, and an agreement to pay a cost to London, this arrangement had been accomplished. Our surprise was great, therefore, when, on arriving off Brest, and preparing to take leave of these pleasant and intelligent persons, we were told the *Maria Stella* was bound on for Brest. The Portuguese captain had reasons of his own, doubtless, for concealing his destination; but that fact did not lessen my extreme disappointment and chagrin. Baptista thought it wise to maintain a dignified composure. He was English by nature, in defiance of his adopted name. Added to his being acquainted with the power of Portuguese lungs, he knew by experience their taste for har-

backward. I felt that the personal termination had been fully accomplished of the solemn friendship of Monsieur de Chabannes and myself; and that it was not good that I should invite a meeting which he did not anticipate. But Baptista, entering abruptly, put all my doubts aside by saying there would be no vessel for the next twelve days, and that there was a low malaria in the town, by which the natives were suffering frightfully, and that we must take away the young ones immediately, lest they should fall with it.

That evening we were seated in the *diligence*, and rolling way towards Paris. Josephita was very much pleased—she wished to see Monsieur de Chabannes again, and Dolores and I could not decide whether we were glad or sorry to be going to see our friends.

To write was impossible before we should ourselves arrive; therefore a little billet, dated from our old apartments, where we were admitted by dint of effort and kindness, electrified Madame Dessin. It had not been despatched an hour, and we were taking our *café*, having made a sumptuous inner after sea-faring viands, which we had not approved, when Monsieur and Madame Dessin presented themselves as ever charmed and captivated, but very nearly incredulous that the billet had been written by me. We had so much to communicate, which they two were so interested in hearing, and they had so many pieces of news with which to entertain us, who had had no letters since we left Barcelona, that it was a very late hour when our friends prepared to leave us. The fact which most interested me of all they related to us was, that Monsieur de Chabannes was at that moment in London. We had determined to remain two days only in Paris; therefore we left on the Thursday morning, being the 10th of June.

How luxurious was the railway-carriage, after all the fatigue we had undergone! We had derived one benefit (!) from having been driven to Paris, which was, that we possessed new bonnets of the very latest *mode*. At Boulogne our good star favoured us,—we caught the steamer, though there had been a doubt of it, and crossing with fair weather and a brisk wind, our feet lighted once more on English ground at Folkstone.

*I had a terrible headache, and fell asleep travelling to*

London, out of which it was very extraordinary to look up upon English railway-guards, and an English railway-station, and English men and women in crowds.

Anne, to whom I had written from Paris, had had time for the finishing strokes of preparations she had been making so long, and she stood with a beaming face at the open door to receive us on the warm June evening, after nearly a twelvemonth's absence.

We were looking about us the next day, feeling all very sweet and home-like, and I was following Anne, talking, about her premises, when visitors came,—Helen and her husband, and the girls. In such a mass of interesting matter (foreign travel, to the uninitiated), we knew not where to begin describing; but our tongues became shortly very glib, as myself, Dolores, and Josephita gave each the particular items which occurred to us; and our friends were entertained and interested in all. The joy of our meeting was not damped by any ill-tidings; nothing had happened in our absence to distress them or me, and Cranston's pictures in the Academy had made a great noise;—"and," continued Helen,—“and,” said her husband, and he placed his hand before her lips,—“and,” cried the young pretty Helen, with her blue eyes sparkling, “papa has got in at last.”

“Upon my word, Miss Barton,” said her father, laughing, “you may, or may not, intend to be flattering.”

But I understood what was meant; and with all my heart I congratulated my faithful old friend upon his academic honours.

“Better late than never,” said he.

“Oh, yes, indeed,” said Helen.

And then I heard how the sensation was so great about his small picture “Desolation,” which fetched a very large sum, and that all the world pronounced the historical picture a *great* picture.

We talked over the paintings at the Louvre, from memory, and I inquired about Garcia's pictures, and heard that the “Fortress,” after Murillo, made a great noise. And Garcia was in London now;—they were engaged to meet him that night, “would not I accompany them?” “No, I wanted rest.” And we talked on afresh, and they made a very long visit, at the close of which nothing appeared to have

been said ; and after the Bartons had gone, Anne helped us to unpack, and we were delighted, delighted—to be back with her again.

She asked no question of that which she longed most to know ; nor had the Bartons either intruded pain upon their welcome ; therefore, once more in my little room, insensibly I compared it with that little room of a far loftier genius far away amidst the palaces of another great city. And my reverie, so distinct from former ones natural to my sanctum, was broken by the entrance of Anne, as usual. She sat down, and I began and told her the whole ; how we found the vast tomb, and what was related to us of the shipwreck, and the fishwoman's sorrows,—the entire history of my pilgrimage. Anne wept over the recital, for my sake, and also for the sake of that lone woman at Peon. Then we went upstairs together, as of old ; and before I slept, I felt more deeply than at any time before, how warm were the hearts I was leaving in Europe ; while I longed unceasingly now, as ever, after those to whom I was going.

But I was not going yet ;—I was to leave more than *love* in Europe. I had been inoculated by the power of another. Like him who died at Missolonghi, I should “wake one day and find myself famous.”

We distributed the gifts we had collected for our friends, and I placed a veto upon any invitations I might happen to receive in the next two months, for I had writing to do.

Being asked to a *conversazione* by an intimate friend of Cranston's, mention was made to me that the celebrated Frenchman, Monsieur Alphonse de Chabannes was expected ; but that did not take me to it. I would have liked to have gone, if only to have had the pleasure of hearing his eloquence again ; but I had long made it a resolution to adhere to any given course, and I would not be tempted to deviate. So I was shut up in my little room, into which in imagination their voices penetrated, and I beheld the smile with which he would greet the pair whom he knew to be *my* friends. I supposed the next day would probably bring him ; and it did. Our meeting was frank and cordial, as such meetings ought to be. I read a few passages for his opinion, and he listened and praised—*he praised*. Dolores and Josephita and he behaved *respectively as they had always behaved*.



He was leaving London the following morning; w deputed messages to our friends in Paris, and then sai "farewell" again.

But as he stood on the threshold, turning to me, he said "I shall see you again; there will be that before you sail fo Peru, which will bring me to London in duty bound; fo am I not your *friend*?"

I smiled with pleasure; for I understood him.

My new book was to come out on the 1st of November it was out of my hands in September; and I prepared t enjoy liberty in London for the first time in my life. should write no more at present.

Time glided pleasantly by; my darlings went out a littl with me, and they again had lessons in music and singing besides which they did much that was useful and ornamenta They had been always industrious; we had never fallen int the young-lady system of being capable of nothing bu amusement; and I was the one of the party who did th least now.

Constantino's letters were very diverting; he was longin for Christmas, which was to bring him to us; and our South American letters, were they not joyful now? for they spok to us of our coming.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Where I am, the great and noble  
Tell me of renown and fame,  
And the red wine sparkles highest  
To do honour to my name.  
Where I am are glorious dreamings,—  
Science, genius, art divine,  
And the great minds whom all honour  
Interchange their thoughts with mine:—  
But *their* faithful hearts are waiting,  
Listening, longing, by the sea,  
Where the treasures of my life are,  
Where I fain would be!"

Yes! it was definitely arranged now, that in April of th following year we should leave England for Peru. I neve realized it till the time came; that which is so long i coming is so marvellous at last.

For seventeen years had I been longing for the sight of that shore and them ; and eagerly, with their young joy, as my maidens looked for it too, they did not know,—they could not feel what I felt. Months beforehand, though I would not have breathed it to Anne for the world, so much she grieved at our leaving her, I could scarcely sleep for the prospect I was nearing. I thought something would happen, that this was too great happiness, that such a crown of bygone grief and joy could not be about to be mine. “Your apartments are prepared,” wrote Maria, “in Lima, and in our small house in Callao too ; for Francisco says you will like that best, because it is by the sea. My heart beats faster and faster with the thought of my daughters’ coming. Do they long for the hour as their adoring mother longs ?” Francisco wrote me instructions with respect to his son, who was to be left in Paris the remaining two years till he also should go home, concluding, “With your usual taste, you have kept aloof till we’ve everything in state ; even the high road between this and Callao has undergone this season a thorough repair.”

This letter proved to me, more than anything else, that it must all be real, especially the directions about Constantino. How happy I was that the boy would have a watchful guardian in Paris. When he came dashing in upon us, impetuous and sparkling, some days before we had expected him—he or I, or both, had made a mistake about the steamer—he was a very fine fellow, sufficient alone to illumine our Christmas with his wit and roguery ; but a more brilliant illumination was vouchsafed me at that time ;—it was as Monsieur de Chabannes had prognosticated.

When Barton’s name was on every tongue, for his Serene Highness Prince — of — bought a picture of his at this time, which excelled everything that had been seen for many years past in London, the world said that a marvellous book had been written at length by me.

At last the long-patient painter and writer reaped a reputation, which the world and their own hearts alike pronounced exalted.

And I took *his* hand in fellowship who had bestowed benevolently upon me the first real promise of my literary life, *when I was an outcast and a beggar.* The man who,

threading frightful localities, drags forth to the light such want and woe that women's hearts in their happy homes are upstirred within them, and his trumpet-voice and their benevolence unite to rescue life and reason,—is *he* not a philanthropist?

As I said, I took his hand in fellowship, and I heard him tell me with a smiling face, while mine was dyed with burning blushes, that we met as equals; but I would not hear him. And others I had known afar off for years, gifted men and women, in their proud generosity flocked round me, and my humility was powerless to stem the torrent which showered upon me.

My publisher sent me in fabled documents; the saloons of Belgravia opened to receive me; women with coronets on their brows presented me with souvenirs; men high in the realm approached me, and I talked with them upon the grandeur of mind. Nor did I decline an opportunity to kiss the hand of Victoria, and receive the bow of the Prince Consort; nay I was subjected to an all but irresistible impulse to seat myself at her Majesty's feet, and ask her about her sons and daughters, the promising children of Great Britain, and tell her that I, a republican, love her, for she is a good woman. As it was, I saw only a noble-looking lady, who addressed me, but to whom I might simply reply. I confess her voice is very silvery, no wonder it rings through the House of Lords.

It is true I am now so naturalized in a republican country, with my brother near me, and receiving constantly the letters of Monsieur de Chabannes, that these tendencies have mellowed the opinions I held while I was the subject of a monarchy. It is true that, seeing as I now see, the free springs of a nation which hangs no purple trappings about the loins of its nobility, which graves no titles with the dignity of its haughty names, which mocks with no buffoonery its government, I feel a kind of scorn of the crowns and thrones of Europe. Indisputably higher in our eyes is he who, standing lone, a soldier citizen, a people's mind-clad son, whom an admiring and grateful country elects to give her laws, than he who is royal-born; yet I am no *Red Republican*; it angered me to see one, framed for high purposes, lowering himself to consort with the refuse of the

French politicians, with his tongue and his pen. I respect the institutions to which I am not amenable.

There was an appearance which I was to make which affected me far more, and was a far higher honour than my presentation at St. James's. The Earl of Elmsley threw open his house to the *litterati* and artists of London;—foreigners of reputation in either order received invitations, and I was to be there. It was on this occasion that Monsieur de Chabannes appeared to attend me. Leaning upon his arm, I found myself in the splendid suite of apartments where treasures of art and *vertu* are tastefully collected together; he assisted me with graceful courtesy to accept and acknowledge the flattering manner in which my presence was marked. Looking back to that night, I grow giddy, so radiant was all around me, so glittering was my individual path, so fascinating its incense.

I was standing in a group of gentlemen who were discussing the progress of Art in this country; near me a brilliant young Italian student, enwrapt with a fiery enthusiasm; listening to him, the grey-beards present knew that, only a boy in years, his was a genius that would not die; when Helen came up to me, and I bent down my head to hear something which was on her lips, by which she seemed agitated. "Every one," she said, "was assuring her that Monsieur de Chabannes and myself were to marry;" but that was evidently not the intelligence she was anxious to tell me. At that moment some person addressed me; I was drawn into conversation again; Helen was attracted away, and I did not hear what that was she had been about to tell me. Later in the evening we were congratulated, both myself and Monsieur de Chabannes; we heard in half-whispers, on either side, that our marriage was considered a brilliant match, and to the bows of Monsieur de Chabannes nobody could attach a yea or a nay, while I tranquilly suffered their compliments, and passed on to another group, whence, if the same story met me there, again we moved on; for I did not choose that the world should say Monsieur de Chabannes was refused by me.

The hours of that proud evening waned, and I was in conversation again with the young student of Turin, and two ladies and several gentlemen (English), were also joining in it—I forget the topic just now; but my eyes wandering from

their faces who were speaking to me, I saw upon a couch a young woman whom I had not met before during the evening. I did not recognize a familiar countenance till she, springing up, stretched out her hands to me, with a quick cry of pleasure; and looking into her clear eyes, and over her pale, sweet face, I knew that it was Caroline—my dear pupil Caroline. And but that I had grown old now, in all in which she was mingled, I must have been transfixed to the spot with the great surprise of seeing her. On her left hand was the tell-tale ring; but there was no space for explanations now; and she was anxiously saying, "where should she find me, that she might bring her husband to me?" and I was just giving her the information for which she waited, when my eyes fell upon another person whose meeting with me was a more solemn *rencontre* than mine with Caroline. For one moment I did not breathe, and then I had recovered; and as I had been towards her in an earlier meeting, she was to me now. She trembled, and her eyes—the stars—were raised and drooped before me, as with a ready hand I invited the clasp of the wife of Mr. Russell; saying, with her once unflinching tone, "I hope you are well, Lucy."

And none could suspect that low down, beneath my tranquillity, there was a heaving and throbbing that thrilled and convulsed my unyouthful frame! as, feeling that another must be at hand, it cried, "Alphonse! Alphonse de Chabannes! art thou close—quite close?" for standing by the side of Alphonse de Chabannes I might bear to meet William Russell, if meet him I must. Yes; his arm was by, my hand was upon it—I was prepared; but *he* came not. And I heard, above the hum of the crowd, the low tones of her voice, as in the hour of my triumph *she* added *her* praise to the honour of the rest, who was married to—*my lord!*

We parted as last we parted, only there was another link now, a stronger chain between us, a darker and deeper gulf; Francisco's child-bride, Mr. Russell's wife, and the sister of the one, and the first love of the other; and I knew only, when I saw her no longer, that scarcely a change was discernible about her—*his love had given her eternal youth, except a soft languor of matronage, making her still more beautiful*—the sweetness subdued of a petted thing whose

life is lost in another's. She sought me no more. Not so Caroline—Caroline came to me, bringing her husband, and her infant of a year old, a lovely party it charmed me to see; and the truth of her heart poured itself into mine, as she said "she never doubted me; but the unfortunate affair of her omitted address had so perplexed mamma. Now it would be all right."

I introduced my wards, and she talked to them in the prettiest manner. She was a most lovely young woman, for she appeared clothed with goodness, far more touching than her absolute beauty which she did not possess. The Milfords came to London and stayed with me, and all was explained, for I had no false shame; and they assisted to make the preparations for which the few weeks, which alone were left, would with difficulty suffice. And Anne was always at work for us, with her willing hand and aching heart; and I was winding up gradually the matters of business incumbent to be transacted by a person in my position who was leaving England for ever. Anne and her husband, in all human probability, were well provided for; Elizabeth had grown a fine stout maiden now.

During the fortnight before we were to sail, the sexton was digging a baby's grave in Lynwood churchyard—it was old John Green, he was an old man now, and he rubbed his eyes with the back of his hand to see who that was who was sitting down on Madam Cameron's grave. It was a very unusual sight to see ladies in the churchyard, except on a Sunday morning, for the squire and his lady were gay folks, and the clergyman was not a married man, and there were no other great people in Lynwood.

The tall lady in the black dress stayed a long while, and from time to time she looked at him, as if she had a mind to speak to him, but she did not do so. She carried away a bit of moss, for there were no flowers round the grave now, nor round the other one beyond it, beside which also she stopped; and presently, with a slow step, and looking behind her many a time, and lifting her handkerchief to her face, she walked out at the gate, and John did not know what became of her. He went home and told his wife about her, and it gave Mrs. Green a great turn, and she made John repeat over again everything he had said.

and off she set, never waiting so much as to put her bonnet on, making all haste she could (*she* was getting a little into years) down to the village green, where an inn had lately sprung up. The landlady told her, in answer to her questions, that a carriage from the station had put up there that morning; and a lady came in it, who the post-boy said had arrived by the down train, and she was gone out of the house a good while, and when she came back she was full of trouble, and bade the driver put his horses to directly, for she wanted to catch the London train; and they had been gone half an hour.

Mrs. Green said, "I thank you," and went away from the door; and the landlady, watching her as she walked along with her head hanging on her breast, felt certain Mrs. Green too was "taking on," and her curiosity was roused to know what John Green's wife could have to do with the grievous London lady. And Mrs. Green fretted for many weeks to think she did not see the lady whom her husband did not know; for she that had been at the missis's death-bed, and nursed the young lady when she was a babe,—knew very well that it was Miss Cameron who had come to weep on her mother's grave; but she never spoke to anybody about it, not even to John.

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

"Not with a heart unmoved I left thy shores,  
Dear native isle! oh, not without a pang,  
As thy fair uplands lessen'd on the view,  
Cast back the long involuntary look!"

SOUTHEY.

I HAD appeared at the last *conversazione*—I had received the last rich gift—I had declined the last proposal of marriage—I had written the last letter to Constantino. Josephita and Dolores had taken leave of Mrs. Ashleigh and Mrs. Blanford. Our possessions, packed in the smallest compass, presented an alarming appearance, notwithstanding that everything was left as remembrances, excepting our personal necessities and treasures; and it was the 15th of April.

Do not you think I suffered when I clasped Anne in my arms, taking a final leave of her? Truly ours had been friendship. I experienced the most exquisite pain in that moment. Neither the sight of the wife of Mr. Russell, nor the parting bow of Monsieur de Chabannes, had struck home to heart or mind, with the pang to them both of this (for my respect and esteem for Anne Lines exceeded my deep affection), nor the earnest hopes of Mrs. Milford, nor the priestly benediction of her husband, nor the tears and kisses of Caroline.

All I could say was, "God bless you, Anne, dear Anne!"

As our carriage rolled from the house, I saw Anne sink down on the door-step, regardless of husband and child, in the abandonment of grief. And I, with my many farewells yet lingering in my ears,—I so rapidly leaving this city—metropolis of the known world—who, receiving on her bosom a vagrant woman, spread wide her arms to clasp her there, the moment that she was worthy—as the temples and palaces yielded place to the green fields and the streams, and I saw London for the last time, (with how different feelings to those with which in my youth I saw it first!) I felt scarce a regret for England or Europe, with the love and the fame they had yielded me; for beyond the tide of my fervent gratitude, a deeper flood rushed over my soul, for I was going to Francisco—going to Francisco's wife. I was going to their home, *at last—at last—at last!*

Their faces were pale with excitement—my pretty ones, sitting opposite to me in the train; my heart swelled towards them; I had nearly fulfilled my probation, since the last steps were begun.

Cranston and his wife met us at the Waterloo Station, to accompany us to Southampton. It was the single link to be clasped in the chain of unbroken friendship.

No tears were in their eyes or mine, although we were parting for ever. The moment of the last embrace was awful; but we wished nothing changed.

And where I once leaned, in my anguish, by the receding vessel's side, I saw Helen lean, as with eager eyes *she* watched, as *I* watched *them* who stood together on the *Atrato's* deck full seventeen years ago.

*Erect as he had stood, I stood this day, strong in the ties that*



rent me from my native land ; while, as the bride had clung about Francisco, Francisco's daughters clung about me now ; for mingled grief and joy amazed them,—they were young.

*La Magdalena*, the magnificent, groaned forth her giant strength, and cleft right through the surge—a mighty monster clothed with majesty—and soon we cleared the grey Southampton Waters ; soon, soon we lost the land ; and gathering then (there was no space before) my stilled and trembling darlings in my arms—tight, tight upon my heart—“Dolores ! is it true ?” I cried, “my child !” And she laid her head upon my breast, and sorrow and sighing fled away, for we *were* going home.

I breasted at length the waves of that ocean, whose leagues I was bound to cross, and the roar of the sounding sea *was* my slumber's lullaby ; but I was constrained to rise in the moonlight, and feeling the heave of the waters beneath me, to ask myself if this too were a dream like the other that went before. We grew more rational in our joy in a few days' time, and we tasted unromance again ; and in health restored, I was less weird than at our embarkation.

There were dances got up in the saloon, and I had leisure to look round at our companions, and could watch the evolutions of the ship, and make friends with the Jack tars.

There was a gentleman from Copiopo, and two young ones from Valparaiso, and a whole French family going out to the husband and father, who was to be found in Santiago ; and some Mexican people who had travelled through Europe returning to Nicaragua ; and a lady and her sister, and her sister's husband (I class them thus, for the single lady was the most intelligent of the three), were bound only to St. Thomas's ; and besides a number of other people, who were not very attractive to me, there was a youth of about nineteen, a Peruvian by birth, bright, gay, impetuous, set free from a college in Germany ; and he and Josephita became such friends, that I had to fall back to the duenna again ; but I found it extremely tiresome to exercise that office.

Shortly we made discoveries : the first by Josephita, who triumphantly informed us that the young Peruvian was a native of Lima, and in Lima he was going to live ; to which circumstances she evidently attached some particular charm.

Dolores, in talking with the young gentleman, chancing to mention the village of Bahrenfeld, he told her he was at college there ; and, learning that her name was De la Vega, owned that he had been quite sure that her brother was his friend ; but he had mischievously kept the secret for a good opportunity to divulge it. And what I found out was this—that our pleasant and sensible young fellow-voyager was the son of that Don Ferdinando Gonzales whom I saw for a short two hours once, and whom I now heard was dead.

For days and nights we sailed smoothly on ; we had not a single gale, and the present was such a pleasant time, we were not too impatient for the destination beyond.

Anchoring in the harbour of St. Thomas, on the 26th, at noon, we were fortunate ; for, disembarking from *La Magdalena*, we found the vessel which was to convey us to Chagres already there.

The crossing of the Isthmus of Panama was an extraordinary undertaking. A small portion of the distance from the opposite coasts was performed by rail ; but I did not feel at all safe on the Panama railway. And then we had to ride mules through difficulties of forest and bog, and indescribable dilemmas, saturated with a pouring rain, which defied the cloaks, shoes, &c., which comprised a part of our outfit, and for which waterproof prices had been paid. The young Manuel Gonzales was exceedingly useful in attendance. I shall always feel greatly indebted to him, on account of crossing the Isthmus of Panama, to say nothing of anything else. My mule, an imperturbable creature, of a very mysterious disposition, wholly defied my control, and it became necessary to effect a change. I never understood why it was necessary ; but Josephita rode afterwards on the same mule with Manuel Gonzales, and then we all went along much better.

Presenting a most grotesque appearance, our various troubles in no way deteriorated from the rapture with which, emerging from dismal sloughs and bushes, corn-fields and pasture-land met our eyes, instead of the gloomy forests, and the clear blue Pacific bursting upon us, we trotted gleefully forward into the town of Panama,—Panama, whence issued the heinous compact of Pizarro, Almagro, and Luque. once the proud city, so bright a jewel in the Castilian crown

Covered with mud, and worn with fatigue, we had been on our mule ride ; now we were so mercilessly bitten by mosquitoes and other winged creatures, that we bade fair to be miserably presentable by the time we reached Callao and Lima.

With no further changes in prospect, we were on board the Pacific ship *Chili*, and once more gliding over the sea.

My whole thoughts were concentrated now on the hour so rapidly approaching, in which should happen reunions which this life seldom yields. Touching at Guayaquil, I was jealous of two hours' stay there ; and we swept on to Truxillo—Truxillo, a name so familiar to my ears ; on the 1st of June, after as swift a passage as anybody remembered, we found ourselves nearing Callao. Yes, the sun which was gone to rest, rising, would find us on shore.

Intensity of joy is hard to bear ; and the dear young girls shared it with me, and scarcely left my side. Night was upon the sea and the land when we entered the harbour.

What would *they* think of their children ? what of *me* ? Oh, how would they receive me ? Would they forget me—naturally—in the delight of parentage ? Should I feel myself *de trop* in their reunited family ?

We sat on the deck, in the midst of a great confusion ; voices in the ship, some shrill, some hoarse, were answered by similar voices on shore. There were no bright lights on the deck, so that they who were hurrying to and fro, had a dark, shadowy look. I seemed to myself to be deaf and blind, with an intolerable sensation, unknown before, binding my chest and stealing my breath, and the whole scene was swimming round with me, when I knew by the exclamations on board that a large boat was alongside of us. There was a slight cessation of the confusion, and one or two lanterns were brought to bear on the further side of the vessel ; and, springing over the ship's side—could that be he ? The full light fell on his face a moment—I knew it ; and the advancing step—I knew that too ; and his voice was borne towards us, issuing rapid orders ; and the men respectfully attended *him* ; and he glanced about him with eagerness and anxiety, and I burst from the clinging arms of my children, and had fallen upon his neck, and my brother's heart was beating against mine once more ; when I remembered that there

were others, nearer and dearer to him, who awaited his embraces. Taking them one and the other in his arms, scarcely less trembling and pale than themselves, the strong man uttered, in his keen joy, a heart-deep thankfulness to God.

Scarce any words had been spoken, with an ebullition of that which could not be told ; and there was a vision of being placed in a chair, and being handed down the ship's side, and a momentary seat in a little boat, out of which I stretched my hands aloft to receive the two who were mine no longer in actual guardianship ; and I remembered thankfully they were in their father's charge ; that they and I were protected now—that I was no longer a lone woman, like the fish-woman of Peon, but had a natural and legitimate stay—the hand and heart of a brother.

And my feet pressed upon that strand, my children on either side, and the voice of Francisco said to me, " God bless and reward you, Mary."

And I could have clasped his knees, in the unutterable tenderness with which fell on my ear the accents which had been the music of my girlhood. Oh, good Francisco ! the heaped-up honours of a nation could not enhance your worth.

An English carriage was waiting for us ; numerous servants were in attendance ; Josephita sprang into her own carriage, with all her natural buoyancy ; Dolores sat by her sister's side, and we two opposite—was it we two ? and we rolled rapidly over ground. It looked a wide road over which we were passing, after we escaped buildings ; and there was a period, not long, and then came noble edifices, and a magnificent cathedral, in the moonlight ; and we were going to the mother of my darlings—to Francisco's home in Lima. On the threshold of its portals—there she stood, the beautiful—beautiful Maria ;—time had only mellowed the glory of her face and form ; and I was in some *spirituel* place, where Castilian love-names were not like words. I saw my maidens on their mother's breast, and her husband was supporting her ; and then one soft arm came round my neck, and another round my waist ; and now that she was embracing me, I could not be *de trop* ; but the scene was *indefinite* ; small sparks shot before my eyes ; I thought of

my ancient enemy, and wondered if I had reached home to die. But Dolores, my Dolores, she knew what it was, and I was not robbed of her ; tenderly, tenderly she hovered about the luxurious couch where they laid me, and with her own hands brought me wine ; and I thought how worthy she was, in her young, fine stateliness, to sit in these splendid halls ; the daughter of Francisco de la Vega would not disgrace her house. And softly, softly fell their accents on my ear, as Francisco leant fondly over me, and Maria's little daughter, a step away, with her small arms spread around mamma ; she, the little girl, the protectress ; she talked to them all with equanimity, as if agitation had died for her, and said roguish things of the way I should behave on the morrow. And was it possible to go to rest ? Were the hours ebbing in their ceaseless course, and should we sleep in Lima ? Blissful, blissful were our dreams that night, mine and my Dolores', who could not just at this juncture leave each other's side. *And so we three got home.*

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## CHAPTER L

"Where I am, the halls are gilded,  
 Stored with pictures bright and rare ;  
 Strains of deep melodious music  
 Float upon the perfumed air ;—  
 Where I am, the sun is shining,  
 And the purple windows glow,  
 Till their rich armorial shadows  
 Stain the marble floor below ;—  
 Where I am, the days are passing  
 O'er a pathway strewn with flowers ;  
 Song and joy, and starry pleasures,  
 Crown the smiling hours !"

THERE were receptions to the Señoritas de la Vega, which were a reflection on the assemblies of Europe. Paris and London might hide their heads, for here was the thrilling heart-service. The beauty and grace of Francisco's daughters charmed their impressible people ;—and think you I had not my reward ?

*The trumpet-tongue of a dazzling fame, which had taken*

the half of a life-time to win,—the holy friendships of times and places never to be known again in the body,—memories of childhood, girlhood, womanhood,—all were left in shadow by the crowning joy which was granted me.

Gradually I made acquaintance with Lima, I did not wish to know it too soon, for was I not intending to reside in it? There are, besides the far-famed cathedral, fifty churches in Lima; and the religious festivals are pompful in the extreme. It was pleasant to be able to speak in Lima of what we had seen in Rome.

The Moorish architecture, and the picturesque costumes, and the singular and interesting customs, took me some time to appreciate. Of all hospitable cities in the world, Lima carries the palm. At nightfall you see shining over gateways a "welcome" which means that any stranger may enter and eat and rest, and find himself an honoured visitor; while in the saloons where the Limeñas are for ever prepared for festivity, no greater compliment can be proffered than the favour of your presence. I was accustomed to steal away from those graceful dancers, some wearing the peculiar robe of Peru, the *saya*, which falls with a wonderful style round their perfect figures, leaving the smallest, prettiest feet exposed to admiration, and the French and German and English, or native gentlemen, to take a favourite seat of mine, where I could survey at my pleasure.

Donna Maria is as fair as her daughters, and mingles as much in the dances; her daughters are peculiar from other ladies, to-night they are wearing some white European dresses which were bought for a *soirée* in London, and at which so many English ladies and gentlemen had flattered my Señoritas that I had been greatly alarmed. And Don Francisco, under the light of yon lamp, is not to be won by surrounding gaiety from the subjects upon which he is conversing with another military man.

I sit at ease in the balcony to see all that is going on within, more perhaps than all are aware, or a deeper tint to Josephita's blushes, and a lower tone of that earnest young gentleman, might be the consequence. Leaning my head from the hanging balcony, I hear in the distance some unknown music, and the sound of it becoming more distinct, I know it is the street-dancing of the Indian women, accom-

panied by their voices, and lutes and harps ; and presently I catch a shadowy view, I see their loose dresses and their wild black hair, and they move in circles with the most graceful movements, and ever and anon with the sweetest cadences. Then noisier sounds of more uncouth groups fill my ears with their discord for a moment, as, crossing some distant thoroughfare, the breeze catches up and flings onward, through the night, the shrill din of their voices and the ring of their castanets.

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## CHAPTER LI.

“ There was a temple, a glorious one,  
Of the noble in death the dwelling ;  
Its gilded dome was bright in the sun,  
And its organ-tones were swelling.”

ON Christmas-day there was a great event in Lima ;—my sparkling merry maiden, my bird, my Josephita, had chosen herself another home, and she was that day's bride. From every church echo caught up the chimes of the cathedral bells, which rang in the marriage of Don Francisco's daughter ; for General de la Vega retained in his fertile mind a vein of England, and did not choose that the bridal should be solemnized at his house, as was the custom of Peru. Lima's beauty and chivalry streamed into the space in the cathedral, unbroken by any pews ; a kneeling multitude to witness this marvellous sight,—a marriage by the high altar.

The little girl's face wore a sweet look, fresh for that day ; there was a smile all over it, a new subdued smile, and the little hands were trembling, and the voice ; but the purity about her, her white robes and falling hair, and all her virgin presence, was thrilling to behold. The bridegroom was beautiful in his triumphant joy, proud in his young responsibility, touching in his devotion. My Dolores looked and moved after the manner of the Madonna.

The mother's tears and the father's serenity gave a tone to the ceremonial, while the wax-candles burning by the altar contested with the evening sun the right to illumine the paintings. There were the seven silver columns, twelve

feet high, each column bearing a golden crown ; and precious stones glittering and sparkling in the pavement. And the pealing notes of the organ swelled, and the rich-robed priests flung the incense around, their scarlet dresses between the columns, passing and repassing the darker aisles ; and I wound along in the crowd which followed on the path of the bridal pair, through the streets paved with evergreen garlands, to the door of her maiden home, which she had so soon resigned.

I saw Francisco lay his hand on his fair young daughter's head, and taking that of the son of his friend, he placed Josephita's in that of Gonzales, and the blessing of the father ratified the benediction of the priest.

There was a multitude of ladies and gentlemen, and presents so rich that they dazzled my eyes ; there was pledging of healths in wine, the clink of their glasses binding friendship ; and I took the bride in my arms, and kissed her brow, her cheek, her lips (I was English), and felt as if my own child had passed into another's care.

Through the imposing Palace-square, and over the Rimac river, with her father's soldiers on either hand, a long glittering file,—for they would have a post assigned them in this day's festival—the bride of so much love and promise passed forth on her bridal way. Josephita in England, and Gonzales in Germany, had heard about honeymoons, which are not current in Peru, and to the unusual solemnization they chose to add an unusual withdrawal, and causing all the rejoicings to wait, and escaping city and society together, they claimed a honeymoon of European fashion beyond Lima, and by the Sierra, where the art of man touches very lightly the handiwork of God,—it is a wild spot of nature's most glorious continent.



## CHAPTER LII.

"What is life!—a bubble floating  
 On a silent rapid stream;  
 Few, too few, its progress noting,  
 Till it bursts and ends the dream."

BERNARD BARTON.

I RECEIVED and wrote letters. Those I received delighted me, and my friends were so kind as to say that mine in their turn delighted them. And after many, many mouths I felt sufficiently reasonable to take up my pen again; for it did not follow, that because I was thirty-eight, and was also very happy, that I should live in idleness the remainder of my days.

I sat with Maria in the balcony in Lima, exchanging the poetry of our early lives!—I spent whole weeks with Dolores at Callao, (the residence there was called my own; its prospect suited Dolores and me, for it was built on the Pacific.) We went out in boats, on excursions far out to sea, or right and left upon the coast, familiar with the strange rapture of peril,—dark oarsmen rowing us along, whom we made to chant songs! I sat alone with Francisco, calm, in the dead of night; and I, a woman and foolish, talked with that great man! and once in the seven days, wrapping ourselves from observation, Dolores and I bent our steps to the edifice where, alone in this vast city, we could publicly worship God. Other religion is tolerated in this country, nominally Romish; but I did not choose that the household of Francisco should obtrude conspicuous tenets.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have lived two years in Peru, and we four women sit alone,—Maria, Dolores, Josephita, and I;—the entrance to the balcony is firmly closed, we cannot rush there to see or hear;—there is death-like stillness within the house, contrasting with the roar without it;—the Rimac is dashing mountains high, though we cannot see the locks, setting as it were her freedom to defy human struggles; but,

above her gurgling and gushing, above her streaming and falling, shrieks and cries, and appalling groans, and the clangour of arms and the discharge of cannon, fill the hot air ; and I am disposed to put on male attire, and, taking the pistols from that case, and yon jewel-hilted rapier, to fling myself into the Palace-square, forgetting that I am but a woman.

We can learn nothing about the fighting, for the doors are fast shut, and the servants have their master's orders for no purpose to unbolt them ; and Maria rocks backward and forward in her terror, and Dolores' arms are crossed on her breast, and the mother holds tightly her sleeping babe, for the husband and son, and the father and brother, and the young gallant bridegroom of Josephita, are all in the battle.

Hours go by—I can bear it no longer—I rush to the outer apartments—I am about to do some mad act, venture some perilous deed. Those men must be thoroughbred Nubians, so grand of limb,—with such statue-like aspects,—are the servants in Francisco's house. I strive to undo with my thin fingers the fastenings of the door, for they do not attend to my orders, and I think I see carried in the bloody corpses of the men we love,—the strong man in his prime,—Constantino so young,—and the proud, promising Gonzales. But it is a mistake of mine—they do not return in that way ; they come with a roll of drums, and the rush of ten thousand feet ; they come with a nation's shouts, on a proud triumphal car, and I feel the light of his eyes once more, as, kneeling for haste and eagerness, I unbuckle the silver spurs of the *President ! the President of Peru !*

Did they say he had three horses shot under him ? did they say he was bleeding from a sabre-cut ? did they say that his voice, above the roar of the battle, with a clarion tongue, poured forth the command, " Let there be quarter given ! " Was there all but a throne about him ? and was he so calm still ? Oh Francisco—my brother ! thou art the Francisco of yore. Knowest thou what there was in that hour in the hearts of his kindred, oh reader ? There was *more* than happiness.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The air was sultry though the sun's rays came not down,*

yet was it less oppressive than a burden of unseen evil on the bosoms of women who sat in disquietude, dreading the coming of some distress ; whose husbands, and fathers, and sons were away on a military expedition. It was a sea-side place, the habitations of which would hold a couple of thousand persons. It had a church, in which ever and anon the women prostrated themselves.

When night came, there was a tramp of feet by the mules' track from beyond the sand mountains, and a troop of soldiers fierce and bloody stole subtly into the town, and penetrated into the women's chambers ; and they bound with thongs every inhabitant—not one escaped ; and closing up the doors of their dwellings, left them prisoners ; and the women knew that their enemies were hiding in secret places, and that when the Peruvian vessel came in sight, if they themselves were not there to warn, the ship's burden would be disembarked, and unprepared and brutally these fathers, and husbands, and sons would be massacred by ten times their numbers—and what could the women do ?

Then sprang curses from their feminine lips,—execrations of impotence, reaching their ears who revelled in the triumph they were waiting. At noon the signal from *La Jesuita* broke their agony and the air.

Then Micaela, a woman of forty years, upon whose husband's head a price was set (he with their two sons was on board *La Jesuita*), she, with a strength unnatural and savage, flung wide her arms with a mighty effort, and the roping burst ; she gasped with her frame's exhaustion, but swift she untied the cords which were about her legs, nor waited to free others, for the moments were precious with the perilled lives of her people. She stole from the door and fled down to the beach, and *La Jesuita* was close upon the strand, only the wind carried away her voice, and they could not hear her. Then she lifted her two arms in the air, four several times, a hundred men for each hand ; but the Peruvians were high-hearted and brave, and counting the two hands for one, they said, "their numbers could bear the brunt of four hundred," and they leapt into the waves, striking out for the shore ; and the native woman fell down senseless, when she could not save.

The men of *La Jesuita* were but ninety strong, and the

foe sprang out of their hidings ; but they were driven fiercely back, back through the town,—back toward the mules' tracks ; but brave men fell at each step, and the cries of the captive women, and the death-shrieks of the combatants, were as the wails of a spirit of sin, and inspired the relentless arms of the enemy ; and they turned and fought afresh, and their numbers bore down the gallant band ; and they pressed upon them, striking, slaying, the bayonets in their breasts at an instant's pause.

Back fell the weaker to the streets and to the strand—backward, backward, with their faces towards the foe, until they were thrust into the sea. And while there is justice in heaven, the deed of that day will not be forgotten on the earth.

The first-born of Micaela had shielded with his breast the breast of his captain, the leader of the doomed company. Stabbed to the heart, the fiends of the tragedy trod over his body, yet living ; and the priceless young life which another had saved at the sacrifice of his own, was spared for the sea to receive it, as, bleeding, blinded, almost alone, but struggling fiercely still, the heir of the Montillos and de la Vega, the last son of the Camerons, was engulfed by the sea—the fated death of our family.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cover his dust ! bear it on before ! the rescued from the waters draws near his city's gate, and Lima sits with ashes on her imperial head !

A tearless mother walks silently by the bier of her only son, a sire with bare head drooping on his breast follows behind ; and on the hearth, where once was *more* than happiness, there now is *more* than grief.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Cannot you conclude, my Prima ? I have promised to look in at old Juana ; she is sick, and it comforts her to see us. Come, let us be gone ; the evening air is so balmy, and"—and the cheek of Dolores is tinged with a soft, soft glow—"and, my beauty, I have a tale to tell you."

I look up with a consternation, for there is a singular tone in her voice, and I see her standing in her bright

dress, with her hair bound so classically round her head, over which the *manta* is streaming, and she is holding tenderly in her hands a splendid *puchero de flores*, upon which she glances shily; for Dolores has but now found the mate to whom she could give her heart;—she never loved another beside her proud and happy husband. I assume my *manta* too (I am almost a Peruvian now); and arm linked in arm, as they used to be in Hyde Park, on the Boulevards, in Italy, we walk in our old fond fashion along by the shore in the twilight,—our favourite path and time; and she tells me (she has no secrets from me) how she is very fortunate, and shall marry the beloved of her heart. And leaving poor Juana, we retrace our way; and I linger a moment at the angle by the rocks, over which the limpid stream is trickling, and stretching out my hand to pick up some shining shell-like substance,—I think that brighter and richer for wear, and more every way becoming the glow of the moonlight upon the Pacific falls over *the turquoise ring*.

THE END.

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